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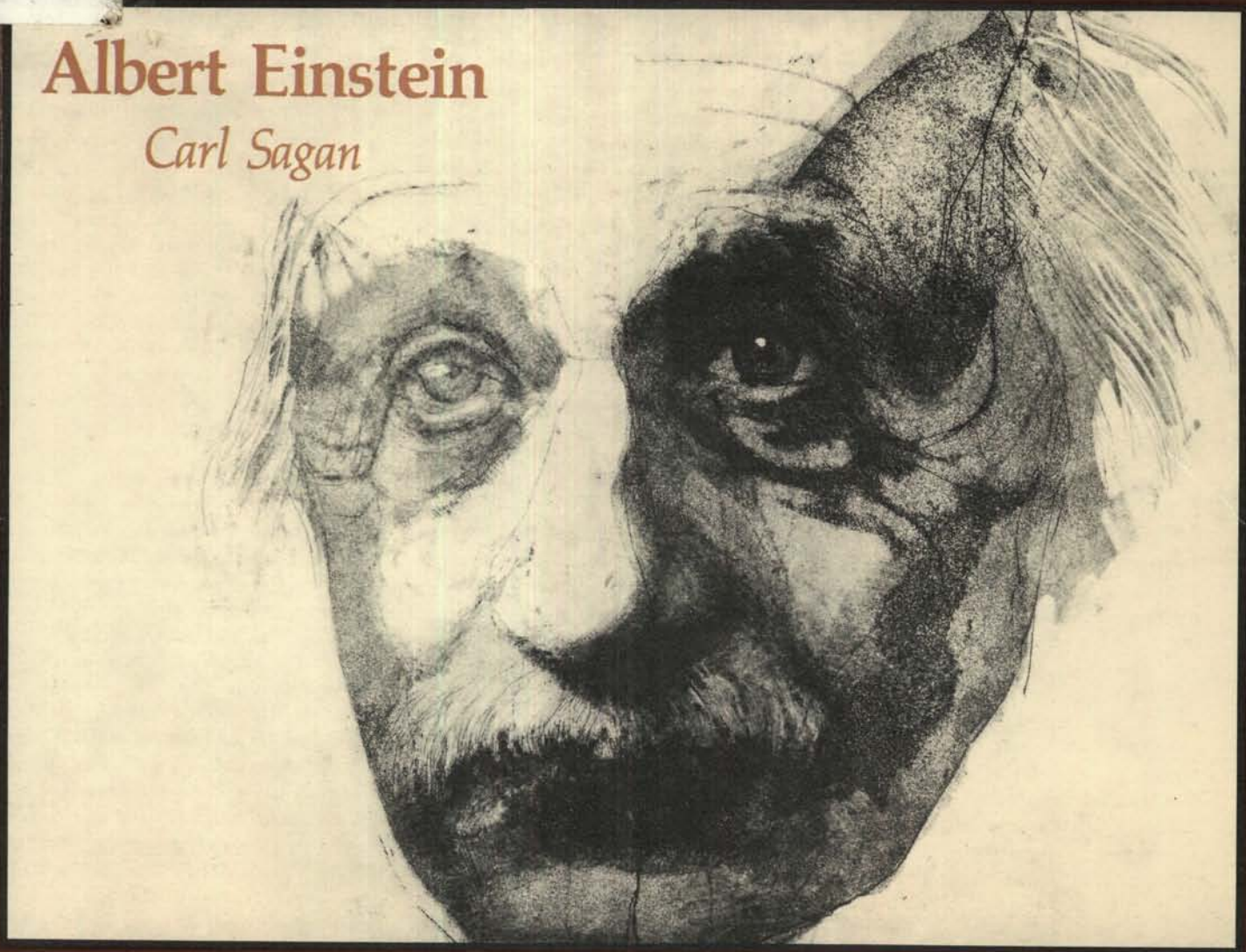

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# TRB

from Washington
September 16, 1978

## Give 'em Hell, Jimmy

Harry Truman was president and we were waiting outside the Oval Office to go in for a press conference, and the delay became intolerable. "I wonder what's holding him up?" somebody exclaimed at last in exasperation. Somebody jeered, "They are trying to get his foot out of his mouth!" We all laughed. People condescended to poor Harry. He was a one-term president. "In a little more than a year his popularity, as measured by the Gallup Poll," recalls Robert J. Donovan, in his excellent study *Conflict and Crisis*, a recollection of that era (W.W. Norton & Co.), "had plunged from 87 percent to 32 percent." That was an extraordinary drop; people forget it when they mention the recent sharp decline in Carter's rating. Carter has gone down from 67 to 39 percent in 12 months.

The odd thing about Truman was that he won in 1948. The little bantam beat Dewey! I don't know that Carter has Truman's trick but, having gone through with it once, I am not joining the defeatist chorus against him quite yet. The press are like the pigeons in Lafayette Park. For no good reason they all take off together, circle around a couple of times, then perch in the elms (or on Andrew Jackson's head). Then they all circle back again.

The next few weeks could tell a lot as to whether Carter will make a recovery. It seems next to impossible that he can win a peace agreement at Camp David but, at least, he is trying, and he is showing himself in a presidential role. Overlapping this comes something very much like a showdown with the Democratic Congress. After a year and a half Congress hasn't yet been able to agree on an energy bill even though our terrifying trade deficit (largely due to oil) is likely to be $30 billion this year; up from $26.7 billion last year. Our allies ask if it is a failure of national will, and the dollar plummets.

Two months from now comes the midterm election. The voter turnout may be even smaller than it was in 1974. National participation for House contests fell to 37 percent four years ago, very near to the all-time low. In a presidential race, of course, more turn out, and the Ford-Carter 1976 race brought 53.3 percent. Even that is below any parliamentary election standard. In the words of MIT professor Walter Dean Burnham, "The decline in voting participation in America is a massive political fact." In the 1870-1894 period, he noted, outside the one-party South, off-year participation averaged over 68 percent. But by 1914 it was down to 59.6 percent. Since then voter alienation has steadily grown; what do parties have to offer in 1978? In Washington Congress and president are both of the same party, and still they can't agree. This alienation raises serious questions about "American democracy." It accompanies the near-collapse of the party structure.

How does midterm 1978 compare with 1946? Both presidents had plunged in the opinion polls. In Truman's day GOP bumper stickers appeared, "Had Enough?" Truman fired Agriculture Secretary Wallace, and labor and liberals were disenchanted. The meat shortage sent prices soaring. Oil was an issue: Truman said offshore oil was under federal jurisdiction; Congress approved a joint resolution nullifying the proclamation and Truman vetoed it. Taft wrote Dewey: "If Truman wanted to elect a Republican Congress, he could not be doing a better job." People made fun of Truman or, what was worse, patronized him. He "simply did not seem quite up to the presidency," people said, and he had the image of the "little man."

Presidential popularity goes through a normal cycle like that. Americans vicariously transfer the credit for good times, and blame for bad times, to the elected leader. The new president is hailed in the honeymoon period because he is going to solve all those problems his predecessor vainly wrestled with; when this doesn't happen his popularity declines. Normally there is an upturn toward the end of his four years. There is a remarkable absence of continuity.

"The upshot is that in the United States," writes James MacGregor Burns in his new political book *Leadership* (Harper & Row), "behind the facade of party activity and organization, politicians gain office and stay in office largely on the strength of personal organizations they have been able to build inside and outside the party and across party lines."

Woodrow Wilson wrote about it as a professor before he became president ("Congressional Government," 1885). Despite powers lodged in congressional standing committees and their chairmen, he said, there were "no authoritative leaders," no national figures, embodying grand principles; rather a host of "court-barons" and "lord-proprietors" with feudal, dispersionary power.

It is an extraordinarily interesting time to watch Washington right now, I think. Short of war, the gravity and complexity of the problems have hardly been equalled, and the customary struggle between president and Congress has the nuance of both sides belonging to the same party. After Lincoln, and for most of the 19th century, the presidency was much weaker than Congress. The list includes Andrew Johnson, Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Arthur, Harrison, McKinley. Will Carter be one of them? The system worked pretty well then because, after all, the problems weren't too severe.

Communist Russia and the nuclear bomb hadn't been invented yet. World trade was relatively unimportant, the multinational corporation hadn't arrived; cheap food, cheap labor and cheap energy sustained America's ebullient economy. It's different today. Can the creaking American separation of powers meet the challenge of maturity—the oil shock triggering economic slowdown, world scarcities of raw materials; huge adverse balance of payments; a sweetheart arrangement at home between key unions and key industries where higher prices follow wages; banks and investors abroad holding $400 billions, and America living beyond its means in energy and letting creditors pay the bill by pushing out dollar IOUs?

If 200 years of history teach anything it is that Congress can't govern. This doesn't mean that Carter is necessarily right; it just means that somebody has to run the store. On the energy bill he says, "The entire world is looking at our government to see whether we have the national will to deal with this difficult challenge." Failure to act, he says, will have a "devastating effect."

All this, and the Middle East, too.

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# Correspondence

## Genetic services

*To the editors:*

We appreciate Neil Pickett's fair article, "Embattled Genes" (*TNR*, August 19). However, the March of Dimes has *not* "made it clear that it cannot be counted on much longer." What we *have* tried to make clear is that the success of our pioneering the establishment of genetic services in the country has created a demand (several laboratories have reported a six-fold increase in referrals over the last 18 months) that a voluntary agency with limited funds cannot possibly meet.

This is why we urge Congress to reauthorize and adequately fund the National Genetic Diseases Act.

*Charles L. Massey*
*President*
*The National Foundation/March of Dimes*

## Hybrid senator

*To the editors:*

Ken Bode overstated the case when he wrote ("Number-One Friend," *TNR*, August 19), "No Democrat has been reelected to the US Senate from Iowa—not ever."

There was one: Guy M. Gillette. But this senator from the land of corn was, perhaps fittingly for the time, a hybrid—Republican on domestic issues but a supporter of FDR on defense and international questions.

Ironically, *The New Republic* of his day buried him with honors as a New Dealer. To clinch the point on Senator Gillette, he was a target of FDR's purge attempt on the issue of "packing" the Supreme Court. I'll bet TRB remembers that distinctly.

*Roland A. White*
*Champaign, Illinois*

## Too comfortable

*To the editors:*

In regard to the increasingly complaisant, neoconservative political tone of *The New Republic* these days and the fact announced by you about a year ago that your average reader makes about forty grand a year I would like to quote from John Jay Chapman's essay on William Lloyd Garrison: "Let us note this also; that a somnolent and inactive reform association, with a fine name, and an aroma of original benevolence about it, and perhaps even a superficially good record, is the very sort of association to attract respectable, rich, lazy and conservative people."

*Richard M. Cook*
*St. Louis, Missouri*

## Above the rabble

*To the editors:*

The double standard addressed in the article "Pot, Privacy and Power" (*TNR*, Aug. 5 & 12) has caused me a lot of personal grief and aggravation since my graduation from law school 18 months ago. The sight of former classmates in the US Attorney's Office dutifully prosecuting "less attractive underclass types" for possession, knowing that they themselves regularly indulge themselves with pot and coke, is enough to get my hackles up. But what really drives me wild with outrage is the indignant and condescending response I get when I display the temerity to question their attitudes.

I am from a blue-collar home, but I labor under no socialist fantasy. I pretend no particular solidarity with the third world, the working class, or the earth's downtrodden. (At best I claim some prior exposure and a little guilt.) Still, I deeply and personally resent the class implications of a group of public officials behaving as though they were a special case all their own.

It is a class based not upon birthright, or even economic status. It is based upon a shared belief—rising to the level of a conviction—that they are somehow so gifted, so bright and talented, that they

*(continued on page 31)*


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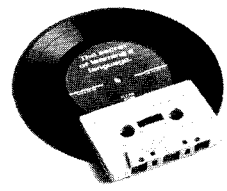

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

September 16, 1978

# Somoza's Final Days

If ever a dictator deserved to be toppled, it is President Anastasio Somoza Debayle of Nicaragua. Somoza is virtually without redeeming political or social value for his own people or for the rest of the world. He is utterly corrupt. Whoever wants to do business in Nicaragua must take Somoza as a partner. There is no major industry in Nicaragua that is not dominated by the Somoza family, directly or indirectly. Somoza owns the national airline, the country's major port (Port Somoza), its shipping line and 20 to 30 percent of its arable land. Whatever his people buy or sell or need involves a cut to Somoza.

Somoza has done virtually nothing for his people. Nearly half the population of 2,250,000 is illiterate. Average per-capita income is only $850 per year, and that figure masks appalling economic inequality. In 1974, average per-capita income in rural areas was $130 per year, and .6 percent of the rural population owned nearly a third of the land, while the bottom half owned only 3.4 percent. When disaster struck his people, in the form of the 1972 earthquake that levelled the capital city of Managua, Somoza responded quickly—by making a financial killing from the suffering of the population.

Somoza's expensive American public relations men try to represent Nicaragua as a "democracy" and an anti-communist ally of the United States, but they are distorting reality. Nicaragua has a constitution, but Somoza basically rules by intimidation. Those he does not own, he suppresses. His rubber-stamp legislature will change the law to suit him. In the past he has silenced the press and declared martial law in response to threats against his rule.

The United States is deeply implicated in the suppression of the Nicaraguan people. The US Marines occupied the country from 1912 until 1933, and the US installed the present dictator's father as president. During 45 years of the Somoza dynasty, the United States has trained and armed its National Guard, propped up its economy and given it political support.

All of this is now coming to an end. A civil war is under way in the countryside, and a general strike is on in the cities, all designed to force Somoza to leave office before his term expires in 1981. He has said that he would not run again, but his opposition has no doubt that he would attempt to continue running the country through his political and economic power, and through the National Guard. Somoza, his public relations men and some allies in the US Congress have been arguing that they face a choice between Somoza and "another Cuba," but the truth is that *every element* of Nicaraguan society opposes Somoza's continuation in power. Certainly there are hardened Communists among the leaders of the *Sandinista* guerrillas, but it is not a foregone conclusion that they would rule Nicaragua if Somoza decided to leave the country. The opposition also now includes businessmen, lawyers, teachers and the clergy.

The Carter administration's record on Nicaragua is a sharp and welcome contrast to that of its predecessors. Carter has tried to use both carrots and sticks with Somoza to secure compliance with US human rights standards. The carrots have aroused the suspicions of anti-Somoza militants. We think it was tactically inept of Carter to send Somoza a letter praising his decision to allow the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to inspect conditions in Nicaragua. If Carter felt compelled to reward Somoza for good behavior, he ought to have had the US ambassador deliver a verbal message, rather than send a personal written message whose contents were leaked to the press. The Carter letter led Somoza's opponents to think the United States is still on the dictator's side, though US officials claim its contents indicate nothing of the kind. The administration would be wise to publish the letter.

The Carter administration has stopped military aid to Somoza and in July the Senate wisely ended US training of the Somoza National Guard. Economic aid continues, but US investigations are convinced it is actually reaching the poor people it is designed to help. Politically, the Carter administration has made it clear the United States no longer is sponsoring the Somoza dynasty. Some oppositionists would like to see the administration do more—call for Somoza's overthrow and give comfort (if not aid) to those who want to depose him. But the United States shouldn't do it. Nicaragua has had enough of the United States as Big Daddy, and the US has had enough of that role.



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Government drug policy
is forcing sick people to break the law.

# Marijuana Therapy

Government doctors are rolling exquisite marijuana cigarettes for a 28-year-old Washingtonian named Bob Randall, placing them in a prescription jar with an adults-only hard-to-twist-off cap and delivering them to him through a government pharmacy. He smokes eight cigarettes a day (he says they don't affect him), then devotes the remainder of his time to fighting the very bureaucrats who set up the program. The reason: Randall has acute glaucoma, and if he did not take marijuana daily, his eye would swell with painful pressure. At least two million other Americans have the same disease, but are forbidden to use Randall's pain-killing tool. If they asked the government for a similar arrangement, they would be turned down.

Federal drug laws still rank marijuana with heroin as a dangerous and medically useless drug, despite growing evidence to the contrary and the government's own willingness to supply Randall with it. This means its use for medicinal purposes is illegal, except through government-sponsored research programs. (All the states also outlaw marijuana, although in some the penalty for its use has been reduced to a civil fine.) The federal government supplies Randall exclusively. He is an experiment, they say. They are not convinced that marijuana aids glaucoma victims. Randall, whose court struggle for legal access to marijuana made him a media hero, charges that the government is inflicting blindness on thousands of Americans each year through inaction. Four federal agencies, a White House office, an interagency committee, two advisory commissions and many state legislatures have converged on the issue of whether and how to supply marijuana as medicine; but there's no sign of progress toward relief for the majority of glaucoma victims.

Glaucoma creates an imbalance in ocular fluid, which puts heavy pressure on the eyeballs. In severe cases, it forms rings in the field of vision, and can result in blindness. Some studies have shown that marijuana, both in natural and synthetic forms, relieves that pressure. Scientists have studied the effect of tetrahydrocannabinol, (THC), the therapeutic ingredient of marijuana, on illnesses ranging from anorexia nervosa to epilepsy. THC also seems to help cancer victims undergoing chemotherapy to endure the painful side effects of treatment.

The four federal agencies looking into marijuana use and abuse—the Drug Enforcement Administration (part of Justice), the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health (the last three part of HEW)—have overlapping responsibilities, and have dealt with their responsibilities mostly by standing still. Nothing has happened and nothing is expected to happen. The Carter administration seems content to let things follow their natural course, which these days means nowhere. Peter Bourne, formerly the president's chief health adviser and spokesman on drug issues, had endorsed more research into the therapeutic uses of THC, but had little opportunity to turn his words into action before his downfall.

Within the federal government, the White House has made the most purposeful attempt to reform the marijuana laws and regulations. President Carter wants to decriminalize the use of pot, but the results have been slight. Most experts believe it will be a year before major research begins into the use of THC to relieve chemotherapy's side effects. Such a program, said the White House drug office, would provide THC to many people through closely controlled programs. Even the marijuana lobby is not opposed to that, although they ask for more, and nearly everyone studying marijuana accepts the more-research-is-needed attitude. Randall and some scientists believe that the synthesized versions of THC have less impact than the natural weed, but all branches of the bureaucracy seem firmly opposed to loosening restrictions on marijuana itself.

The main advocate (besides Randall) of making marijuana available as a drug is the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML), a lobbying group which counts Hunter Thompson, Jacob Javits and Hugh Hefner among its members. NORML has been preoccupied lately with the scare over paraquat sprays on marijuana supplies. It has become, by default, a lobbyist for glaucoma victims who have no interest in marijuana as anything other than a therapeutic drug. NORML has been collecting case histories on sufferers-turned-smokers and badgering officials for an expedited change in policy. Pharmaceutical companies would be the logical advocates of the new therapeutic drugs. But since marijuana is a natural substance and can't be patented, they are not interested. The drug companies have not done research on marijuana's therapeutic effects, and have not lobbied for changes in the government's marijuana policy.

The burden of marijuana research therefore has fallen on the government. The National Institute on Drug Abuse has paid for 14 studies on marijuana's therapeutic value since 1966, when NIDA was founded. The total bill, $1.5 million, hardly rivals what private industry spends on researching, patenting and marketing a new drug. The National Eye Institute, part of HEW's National Institutes of Health, has spent $265,000 on research projects related to marijuana. NORML believes the Food and Drug Administration should finance marijuana research, but the FDA insists that its job is only to approve drugs, based on research done by others. Once NIDA found evidence of THC's



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pain-killing effects, another interagency committee was formed within HEW to discuss it. This, says Alice O'Leary of the NORML staff, was "the kiss of death." Still, they kept pushing.

After a four-year battle and numerous hearings and postponements, NORML finally won a small victory this March in another committee—the Controlled Substances Advisory Commission—which recommends to the FDA that synthetic THC be reclassified to a less restrictive category, which would stimulate more research. NORML wanted the commission to recommend reclassification for natural THC, or marijuana itself. It was still a victory, but now NORML says the recommendations will get lost in the bureaucratic maze. So far NORML is right. The recommendations have sat on FDA Commissioner Donald Kennedy's desk for almost six months—far longer than normal or necessary—and they have yet to be read by the DEA or by Attorney General Griffin Bell.

While new regulations and proposals filter their way through the federal government, several state legislatures have been writing laws to help their residents overcome the hurdles of both state and federal law to use marijuana for therapeutic purposes. These laws help individuals to qualify as a government-sponsored research project for access to the drug. According to Anne Murray, an aide to the New Mexico state legislature and author of that state's law, getting NIDA approval for a marijuana research project involves "tons of releases, waivers and time." No private researcher would be able to meet NIDA's requirements, so the new law enabled New Mexico to hire scientists who worked full-time for several weeks to do the paperwork.

There is some ambiguity in the Carter administration's attitude toward these state efforts. Robert Angerola, a White House domestic policy aide who works on marijuana issues, said he was "displeased" with the state laws passed in New Mexico, Florida and Illinois because in their implied approval of therapeutic marijuana use they constituted "legislating medicine." But Anne Murray used a letter from the White House, which she called an "endorsement" of the bill, in her lobbying efforts, and said, "I think it helped a lot." The letter was signed by Robert Angerola.

The New Mexico law was designed primarily to help one person—Lynn Pierson, a 27-year-old cancer patient who had suffered from the side effects of chemotherapy for several years. He had been using marijuana illegally to relieve the pain, and New Mexico lawmakers—including Jerry Apodaca, the governor—sought to provide him with marijuana through legal channels. Late last month, Lynn Pierson died of cancer. Hours later, the FDA approved the state's research application after 30 days of review. His death would not have been prevented by earlier approval. He took marijuana anyway, and it only dulled the pain. The effort on his behalf will now benefit others in need of marijuana for health reasons, who are fortunate enough to live in New Mexico. Thanks to an inept federal bureaucracy, glaucoma and cancer patients in the other 49 states are not so fortunate.

**David Blum**

Our man calls it.

# Summit Point Spread

As you read this, perhaps you already know what happened at Camp David, but as I write it, I haven't a clue. In fact, Begin, Sadat and Carter are just sitting down for their first joint meeting, and so whatever is to happen on the mountain hasn't begun to happen yet. This puts me in an ideal position from which to comment. I do not mean to be facetious about some of the most serious business facing the world today, but at this moment I stand in relation to the Camp David summit in something like the same position that Jimmy the Greek assumes when he predicts the outcome of the weekend's football games. I forswear his role of assisting gamblers in making their bets. But Jimmy the Greek's point-spread forecasts also serve to tell football fans, when the weekend is over, whether the teams did better or worse than they were "expected to."

There is considerable need for some advance point-spread forecasting on the Camp David summit, so that citizens can judge (when it's over) whether the participants achieved "success" or "failure." At the moment, any newspaper reader and TV watcher who is not massively confused about whether to be optimistic or pessimistic—and what to be hopeful or distraught *about*—has not been paying close enough attention.

President Carter contributed to the confusion at his August 17 press conference by declaring that the summit "is a very high risk thing for me politically because now I think if we are unsuccessful at Camp David, I will certainly have to share part of the blame for that failure." *I predict: President Carter will suffer no political damage from the Camp David summit.* For the summit to be a political disaster for Carter, not only would the conference have to fail, but it would have to appear to be his fault. It's conceivable that both Begin and Sadat could emerge saying that Carter had made it impossible for them to reach an agreement, and that chagrined American aides would have to mumble confirmation, but it seems unlikely this will happen.

To the contrary, if Begin and Sadat fail to reach agreement, it is likely they will go away blaming each other. Carter will not win the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts as a statesman, but neither will he suffer politically. Some people will try to say, "This proves the



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president can't hack it." But I think more people will say, "He tried." Gerald Ford's polls went up with the Mayaguez fiasco. John F. Kennedy's did so even with the Bay of Pigs. I'd bet (though I don't bet) that Carter's standing in the polls already has risen, as voters see him taking bold, presidential steps to bring peace to the world. A cynic might suggest that Gerald Rafshoon had something to do with the calling of this summit, and the cynic might even be right. If so, I'd say, Hooray for Gerald Rafshoon, and for Rosalynn Carter, who had him hired.

Now as to serious business: what will happen at the summit? *I predict that the leaders will fail to arrive at the "framework for peace" that President Carter seeks.* Carter's goal seems to be a set of agreements-in-principle on the key issues dividing Israel and Egypt. On several items, the two sides seem to be not too far apart. Israel is willing to give back the Sinai, captured from Egypt in 1967. Egypt is willing to give Israel "peace"—that is, an end to the state of war between them and normalization of relations. The two sides seem to have a common understanding of Israel's security needs, including demilitarization and monitoring of restored territory. Sadat has no objection to a US-Israeli defense treaty as a guarantee of Israel's security. He probably would welcome establishment of a US air base in Sinai.

If these were the essence of the differences between Israel and Egypt, there could have been agreement long ago, without a summit. Israel hoped, in fact, to swap the Sinai for peace in a "separate" settlement with Egypt that would deprive the Arab anti-Israel alliance of its most populous and powerful military component. Sadat rejected the deal when it was offered, and gives no indication whatever of being willing to accept it now. Sadat has been accused of treason to the Arab cause because he talked to Israel separately; reaching a separate peace is something he apparently never can do.

The sticking issue between Israel and Egypt remains the future of the West Bank. Even here, the two sides have narrowed their differences. Egypt accepts Israel's proposal for a five-year transition period in the governance of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the two sides are not terribly far apart on how the areas should be run during that time. Israel has offered limited self-rule to the Palestinian Arabs who live in the West Bank, and lately has expressed willingness to dismantle the military government there. Sadat wants Arabs to police themselves, but he accepts Israel's need for overall security control of the areas. Israel wants to keep the influence of the Palestine Liberation Organization to a minimum and so, apparently, does Sadat.

But everything breaks apart over the question of what will happen to the West Bank after the five-year transition. Begin's unswerving religious and ideological conviction of a lifetime is that the West Bank—Biblical Judea and Samaria—belongs to the historic Land of Israel and cannot be ceded to foreign sovereignty. Sadat's position is that all Arab land captured by Israel in 1967, including Jordan's West Bank, must be returned to Arab rule. A recent speech by Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan suggested that Israel would be willing to *discuss* the question of West Bank sovereignty in five years' time, but it is hard to see how Sadat ever could accept that as a strong enough commitment. Most of his Arab brothers believe profoundly that Israel intends to hold the West Bank forever, and they will keep up a holy storm if he settles for less than an Israeli agreement in principle to give up the West Bank to Arab rule—*sometime.* This is precisely the commitment Begin seems conscience-bound never to give.

The United States has been trying valiantly to work its way around the West Bank dilemma, and presumably this will occupy the tensest hours at Camp David. The administration strategy has been a wise one, and not widely appreciated. Instead of leaping in with grand comprehensive American plans like that of former secretary of state William P. Rogers in 1970 and that drafted in 1976 by a panel assembled by the Brookings Institution, the administration has tried to find the shortest distance between Egypt's and Israel's own positions, and to place American "bridges" across the gaps. For several months, the United States has been trying to convert Israel's open-ended Arab self-rule proposal into a promise that Arabs someday will control the West Bank, or part of it. At Camp David, reportedly, President Carter will be working on Begin to agree to an irreversible process leading to Arab domination of the area. Some Israelis already accuse Begin of having set a process in motion that will lead inevitably to an independent Palestinian state, but Sadat doesn't believe it, and neither do the other Arabs.

Since they agree on so much already, it will be a tragedy if Sadat and Begin cannot step across this one gap that divides them. But I don't think they can. Begin has too much invested in Israeli control of the West Bank. It's largely a psychological matter for him, but Sadat cannot help but see it as a case of territorial expansionism. The two of them have come a long way toward one another, but they are still very far apart. And I do not see that even the atmosphere at Camp David or the influence of President Carter can change things. This is an unlikely mix of personalities, anyway—something like stirring a stone together with molasses and adding mercury vapor. Trying the recipe at high altitude will not necessarily make it gel.

What will happen after a break-up at Camp David? *I predict an all-Arab summit to welcome Sadat back into the anti-Israel front. I predict an Israeli pre-emptive strike against Syria on the pretext of saving Lebanese Christian rightists. I predict a chill in US-Israeli relations as the Carter administration tries to maintain influence with the Arabs and put pressure on Israel. I predict a pro-Israeli counterattack in Congress, and a political bash up between branches of the US government. I predict US policy toward the*



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*Middle East will be a major 1980 campaign issue. Until it is clear where the US stands, I predict that the US will lose power to make peace in the Middle East, and the Soviet Union will gain power to make trouble. I predict that the Soviets will step up arms supplies to the radical Arabs, who in turn will put pressure on the moderate Arabs to be immoderate toward Israel. I predict that the moderates will turn to France for weapons with which to fight another Mideast war. When Israel has won it, at great cost to both sides and after another near-confrontation between the US and Russia, I predict that the United Nations Security Council will call again for peace negotiations.*

I hope I am wrong.

**Morton Kondracke**

After the defeat of the Union of the Left.

# French CP Regroups

Between spring 1977 and spring 1978, the French Communist Party managed at least one victory: it protected its mysteries and kept its inner secrets from the professional CP watchers. The only thing that changed was that the observers moved from reverence to indignation tinged with contempt.

Circumstances helped the party to protect its privacy. The left coalition's failure, in the legislative elections of March 1978, was practically assured in the first round of the two-stage vote. This miserable showing surprised even those few expert observers who thought the governing right-conservative coalition would ultimately win after a first setback. A first-round victory for the left coalition, or a close vote, would have forced the Communist Party to show its hand. The Communists would have had to decide whether to agree with the Socialists to back each other's winning candidates from the first round in the final balloting.

Indignation at the Communist Party's behavior after the electoral failure is unwarranted. Its conduct could have been predicted from an understanding of its complex inner logic. The satisfaction it flaunted at being able to jettison its allies of the left was not feigned.

It was never really a truly *common* electoral effort for the Communists. They attempted to manipulate the Socialists—who, they were anyhow convinced, remained overwhelmingly social-democratic both in membership and appeal—by alternating appeals to their broad base and pressure on their left wing. The purpose was to lead the Socialists to commit themselves to programs sanctioned by Communist dogma and likely to cause schism in the socialist ranks.

The Communist movement itself may suffer from conceptual defects that will always, at least in a country like France, cause a Union of the Left to break apart, even after a long period of common effort. The reason is that any initial success would assuredly result in a disproportionate growth of the Socialist Party, a development that would endanger the Communists' ability to control the situation.

The only strategy for a Union of the Left that has succeeded anywhere—that is, the only arrangement that has produced socialist dictatorships—has been the strategy of national union in the People's Democracies of Eastern Europe following World War II. This arrangement succeeded for an extrinsic reason: the occupation of the countries in question by the Soviet army.

Given all this, it is absurd for the French Communists—*and* the Socialists—to insist periodically on a strategy of coalition that can only end the way it has three times in the past: with a definitive split. This can happen either after failure, as in 1978, or after success, as in 1937 and 1947. It is a measure of the durability of French political mythology that it is impossible to find a Socialist, or even a Communist dissident who suggests that this fact deserves serious study. From all sides, the preferred explanation is that if only the other partner had played along, things would have turned out differently.

The lesson is critical. In recent years, the Communists could have accepted short or long-term adjustments of their traditional ideology as an accommodation to the exercise of authority when they came to power. For example, they could have relinquished the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat. They have not, in fact, questioned, even in the abstract, the applicability of traditional communist principles, no matter what the situation might be, or whatever form those principles might take.

There has been no movement toward self-examination since the party's electoral humiliation. And now that the top priority is said to be "perfecting" democratic centralism, the 23rd Congress of the French Communist Party probably will use that as an excuse to neglect this crucial matter. One has to conclude either that the Union of the Left is an absurd idea or, at the very least, that the Communists are not interested in its success. From the way in which they avert their eyes from reality, we cannot be in any doubt.

Do the Communists think of the Union of the Left as simply a means to their own ends? Do they revert to it periodically simply for its advantageous byproducts? In 1936 the Popular Front enabled the Communists to achieve their two principal aims. They established their legitimacy and laid the bases for a permanent existence—no longer resting simply on theoretical arguments, but able to claim a real capacity to represent the workers. At the same time—a concrete achievement indeed—they assumed control of the CGT, now the largest labor union in France. Between 1943 and 1947, in the Resistance movement, they broadened the sources of their vitality and moved from social



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legitimacy within the working class to national legitimacy. The party, still made up of a limited network of regional cells implanted within "worker fortresses," subsequently developed into a concentric organization that reached into every part of the country.

The peripheral benefits were harder to find in this latest alliance, unless we count the Communist Party's ability to get out of its Stalinist rut. Much to the fascination of the Soviets, the French Communist Party was able to position itself so that it could work its own backyard at leisure with greatly increased autonomy without completely breaking with the Socialist-bloc world.

French-style Eurocommunism, whose direction and substance are quite distinct from the Union of the Left, might also have derived from the Union the same increase of vitality, prestige, and potential that emboldened and renewed the French CP. This is the one and only point of connection between these two processes. The Union of the Left temporarily furnished a favorable point of contact. It operated like a short-term credit issued to a businessman, which allows investments and other adjustments which have been long needed. In this case, the investments and adjustments shared a common shelter under the label of Eurocommunism.

The short-term credit aided the French CP to increase its most precious asset—the recruitment of active members. What would have been impossible for this anemic party composed primarily of old militants with unchanging memories, became possible when the initial successes and the hopes aroused by the strategy of the Union of the Left (although half-thought-out and destined for disappointment) brought to the Communist Party a large, energetic younger generation. The number of new CP memberships each year increased from 40,000 in the 1960s to 70,000 in the early 1970s, to 100,000 and more since 1975. The total number of members grew from 400,000 to 700,000 in the same period.

Because the Union of the Left between 1963 and 1978 furnished the energy to launch French Eurocommunism, the Communist leaders now can scoff at their dissident opponents who, precisely in the name of Eurocommunism, accepted the complaints of the Socialists that the defeat of the left, when it was so close to winning, proved the sterility of the preceding 15 years. What Maurice Thorez neither wanted nor would have achieved, Georges Marchais has achieved with no great problem. He has gotten the Communists to abandon the illusion that somewhere in the East there exists a perfect society. He has gotten them to lower their expectations and hopes so that they will no longer be exposed to such chilling disappointment, and yet to still prefer the imperfect Eastern-bloc Communist society to Western society. Finally, he has heightened the specifically French dimension of the Communist Party's identity, so that the ills of Western society can be ascribed to its not being Communist and the ills of the Socialist society can be ascribed to its not being French.

This is why the French Communist Party—far from experiencing the disarray of the Socialist Party which, when deprived of the prospect of governing, lost its entire perspective—appears to be strong enough to stifle its dissidents.

Since the Communists consider the Union of the Left to be one strategy among many others, they can continue to pay abstract allegiance to it while destroying its concrete foundation—namely, the existence of a Socialist Party. (Every union, after all, needs at least two elements to unite.) The French CP can now exert as great an effort to weaken the Socialist Party as it previously had exerted to aid the Socialist renaissance—and with the same relative success. Sadly, the Socialist Party, this time as in the past, helped along the Communist strategy. It accepted as the only alternatives either burying itself in the Union, seeking its own defeat in a foolish void (an indifferent beauty's despised lover is always ridiculous), or searching elsewhere (obviously, on the right) for the support and consolations it was refused on the left. It would "drift to the right," confirming *post facto* what the Communists had accused it of before the fact without any grounds.

Meanwhile, French Eurocommunism has now cleared up most of its ambiguities. This increases the Communist Party's capacity to pursue white-collar workers. This involves a delicately nuanced remodeling of Communist identity: the *worker* element is jealously guarded; the *French* roots are accentuated; imitation of the Soviet model is very much downplayed. To say that nothing has changed is excessive; but to say that this is a schism on the scale of China, or even an intermittently bitter heresy like Yugoslavia's, also exaggerates.

If, somehow, the Soviets do not lose patience with such complex maneuvers in the service of modest, if crucial, gains, the French CP could even allow itself the luxury of becoming once again "the eldest daughter of the Church in the West." The French Party's public condemnation of a few dissidents who have particularly irritated the Soviets seems to have given the Soviets peace of mind. The French Party could be in the West what the Rumanian Party is in the East—above suspicion in terms of basic ideology but able to take on a well-turned nationalist air.

**Annie Kriegel**

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Leonard Mayhew translated this article from the French.



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Albert Einstein, 1879-1955.

# The Other World That Beckons

## by Carl Sagan

*"To punish me for my contempt for authority, Fate made me an authority myself."—Einstein*

Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, Germany, in 1879, just a century ago. He is one of the small group of people in any epoch who remake the world through a special gift, a talent for perceiving old things in new ways, for posing deep challenges to conventional wisdom. For many decades he was a saintly and honored figure, the only scientist the average person could readily name. In part because of his scientific accomplishments, at least dimly grasped by the public; in part because of his courageous positions on social issues; and in part because of his saintly personality, Einstein was admired and revered throughout the world. For scientifically inclined children of immigrant parents, or those growing up in the depression, like me, the reverence accorded Einstein demonstrated that there were such people as scientists, that a scientific career might not be totally beyond hope. One major function which he involuntarily served was as a scientific role model. Without Einstein, many of the young people who became scientists after 1920 might never have heard of the existence of the scientific enterprise. The logic behind Einstein's special theory of relativity could have been developed a century earlier; but, although there were some premonitory insights by others, relativity had to wait for Einstein. Yet fundamentally the physics of special relativity is very simple; and many of the essential results can be derived from high school algebra and consideration of a boat paddling upstream and downstream. Einstein's life was rich in genius and irony, passion for the issues of his time, insights into education, the connection between science and politics and a demonstration that individuals can after all change the world.

As a child Einstein showed little indication of what was to come. "My parents," he recalled later, "were worried because I started to talk comparatively late, and they consulted the doctor because of it. . . . I was at that time . . . certainly not younger than three." He was an indifferent student in elementary school. He said the teachers reminded him of drill sergeants. In Einstein's youth a bombastic nationalism and intellectual rigidity were the hallmarks of European education. He rebelled against the dull, mechanized methods of teaching. "I preferred to endure all sorts of punishment rather than learn to gabble by rote." Einstein always detested rigid disciplinarians, in education, in science and in politics.

At age five he was stirred by the mystery of a compass. And, he later wrote, "at the age of 12 I experienced a second wonder of a totally different nature in a little book dealing with Euclidean plane geometry. . . . Here were assertions, as for example the intersection of the three altitudes of a triangle in one point, which—though by no means evident—could nevertheless be proved with such certainty that any doubt appeared to be out of the question. This lucidity and certainty made an indescribable impression upon me." Formal schooling provided only a vexing interruption to such contemplations. Einstein wrote of his self-education, "At the age of 12 to 16 I familiarized myself with the elements of mathematics together with the principles of differential and integral calculus. In doing so I had the good fortune of finding books which were not too particular in their logical rigor, but which made up for this by permitting the main thoughts to stand out clearly and synoptically. . . . I also had the good fortune of getting to know the essential results and methods of the entire field of the natural sciences in an excellent popular exposition, which limited itself almost throughout to qualitative aspects . . . . a work which I read with breathless attention." Modern popularizers of science may take some comfort.

Not one of his teachers seems to have recognized his talents. At the Munich Gymnasium, the city's leading secondary school, one of the teachers told him, "You'll never amount to anything, Einstein." When Einstein was 15 a teacher strongly suggested that he leave school. The teacher remarked, "Your very presence spoils the respect of the class for me." Einstein accepted this suggestion with gusto and spent many months wandering through northern Italy.

Einstein's curiosity about physics and his wonder about the natural universe soon mastered his distaste for formal education and he found himself applying, with no high school diploma, to the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland. He failed the entrance examination. Accordingly, he enrolled himself in a Swiss high school to satisfy his deficiencies and was admitted to the Federal Institute the following year. But he was still a mediocre student. He resented the prescribed curriculum, and avoided the lecture room in order to pursue his true interests. He later wrote: "The hitch in this was, of course, the fact that you had to cram all this stuff into your mind for the examination,

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whether you liked it or not."

He managed to graduate only because his close friend Marcel Grossmann assiduously attended classes and shared his notes with Einstein. On Grossmann's death many years later Einstein wrote, "I remember our student days. He the irreproachable student, I myself disorderly and a dreamer. He on good terms with the teachers and understanding everything, I a pariah, discontent and little loved. . . . Then the end of our studies—I was suddenly abandoned by everyone, standing at a loss on the threshold of life." By immersing himself in Grossmann's notes Einstein managed to graduate from college. But, he recalled, studying for the final examinations "had such a deterring effect on me that . . . I found the consideration of any scientific problem distasteful to me for an entire year. . . . It is little short of a miracle that modern methods of instruction have not already completely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry, because what this delicate little plant needs most, apart from initial stimulation, is freedom; without that it is surely destroyed. . . . I believe that one could even deprive a healthy beast of prey of its voraciousness, if one could force it with a whip to eat continuously whether it were hungry or not. . . . " His remarks should be sobering to those of us engaged in higher education in science. I wonder how many potential Einsteins have been permanently discouraged through the forced feeding of curricula and competitive examinations.

After supporting himself with odd jobs, and being passed over for positions he considered desirable, Einstein accepted an offer as an examiner of applications at the Swiss patent office in Bern, an opportunity made available through the intervention of Marcel Grossmann's father. About the same time he rejected his German nationality and became a Swiss citizen. Three years later, in 1903, he married his university sweetheart.

One of his biographers, Banesh Hoffman, writes that at the patent office, Einstein "soon learned to do his chores efficiently and this let him snatch precious morsels of time for his own surreptitious calculations, which he guiltily hid in a drawer when footsteps approached." Such were the circumstances attending the birth of the great relativity theory. But Einstein later nostalgically recalled the patent office as "that secular cloister where I hatched my most beautiful ideas." On several occasions he suggested to colleagues that the occupation of lighthouse keeper would be a suitable position for a scientist—because the work would be comparatively easy and would allow the contemplation necessary to do scientific research. "For Einstein," said his collaborator Leopold Infeld, "loneliness, life in a lighthouse, would be most stimulating, would free him from so many of the duties which he hates. In fact it would be for him the ideal life. But nearly every scientist thinks just the opposite. It was the curse of *my* life that for a long time I was not in a scientific atmosphere, that I had no one with whom to talk physics." Einstein also believed that there was something dishonest about making money by teaching physics. He argued that it was far better for a physicist to support himself by some other simple and honest labor, and do physics in his spare time. When making a similar remark many years later in America, Einstein mused that he would have liked to have been a plumber, and promptly was awarded honorary membership in the plumbers' union.

In 1905 Einstein published four papers, the product of his spare time at the Swiss patent office, in the leading physics journal of the time, the *Annalen der Physik*. The first demonstrated that light has particle as well as wave properties, and explained the previously baffling photoelectric effect, in which electrons are emitted by solids when irradiated by light. The second explored the nature of molecules by explaining the statistical "Brownian motion" of suspended small particles. The third and fourth introduced the special theory of relativity, and for the first time expressed the famous equation $E=mc^2$, which is so widely quoted and so rarely understood.

The equation expresses the convertibility of matter into energy and vice versa. It extends the law of the conservation of energy into a law of conservation of energy and mass, stating that energy and mass can be neither created nor destroyed—although one form of energy or matter can be converted into another form. In the equation E stands for the energy equivalent of the mass m. The amount of energy that could, under ideal circumstances, be extracted from a mass m is $mc^2$, where c is the velocity of light—30 billion centimeters per second. The velocity of light is always written as lower-case c, never as upper-case. If we measure m in grams and c in centimeters per second, E is measured in a unit of energy called ergs. The complete conversion of one gram of mass into energy thus releases $1 \times (3 \times 10^{10})^2 = 9 \times 10^{20}$ ergs, which is the equivalent of the explosion of roughly a thousand tons of TNT. Thus enormous energy resources are contained in tiny amounts of matter, if only we knew how to extract the energy. Nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants are common terrestrial examples of our halting and ethically ambiguous efforts to extract the energy that Einstein showed was present in all matter. A thermonuclear weapon, a hydrogen bomb, is capable of extracting less than one percent of $mc^2$ from a mass m of hydrogen.

Einstein's four papers published in 1905 would have been an impressive output for the full-time research work of a physicist over a lifetime. For the spare-time work of a 26-year-old Swiss patent clerk in a single year it is nothing short of astonishing. Many historians of science have called 1905 the *annus mirabilis*, the miracle year. There had been only one previous such year in the history of physics: 1666, when Isaac Newton, aged 24,



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in enforced rural isolation (because of an epidemic of bubonic plague), produced an explanation for the spectral nature of sunlight, invented differential and integral calculus and devised the universal theory of gravitation. Together with the general theory of relativity, first formulated in 1915, the 1905 papers represent the major output of Einstein's scientific life.

Before Einstein it was widely held by physicists that there were privileged frames of reference, such things as absolute space and absolute time. Einstein's starting point was that all frames of reference—all observers, no matter what their locale, velocity or acceleration—would see the fundamental laws of nature in the same way. It seems likely that Einstein's view on frames of reference was influenced by his social and political attitudes and his resistance to the strident nationalism and jingoism which he found in late 19th-century Germany. Indeed in this sense the idea of relativity has become an anthropological commonplace and social scientists have adopted the idea of cultural relativism: that there are many different cultural contexts and world views, ethical and religious precepts, expressed by various human societies and all are of comparable validity.

Special relativity was by no means widely accepted at first. Attempting once again to break into an academic career, Einstein submitted his already-published relativity paper to Bern University in Switzerland as an example of his work. He evidently considered it a significant piece of research. It was rejected as incomprehensible, and Einstein remained at the patent office until 1909. But his published work did not go unnoticed. It slowly began to dawn on a few of the leading European physicists that Einstein might well be one of the greatest scientists of all time. Still, his work on relativity remained highly controversial. In a letter recommending Einstein for a position at the University of Berlin, a leading German scientist suggested that relativity was a hypothetical excursion, a momentary aberration, and that, despite it, Einstein really *was* a first-rate thinker. (Einstein's Nobel Prize, which he learned about during a visit to the Orient in 1921, was awarded for his paper on the photoelectric effect and other contributions to theoretical physics. Relativity was still considered too controversial to be mentioned explicitly.)

Einstein's views on religion and politics were connected. His parents were of Jewish origin although they did not observe religious rituals. At first Einstein came to a conventional religiosity "by way of the traditional education machine, the State and the schools." But at age 12 this came to an abrupt end: "Through the reading of popular scientific books I soon reached the conviction that much of the stories of the Bible could not be true. The consequence was a positively fanatic free thinking coupled with the impression that youth is intentionally being deceived by the State through lies; it was a crushing impression. Suspicion against every kind of authority grew out of this experience, a skeptical attitude toward the convictions which were alive in any specific social environment—an attitude which has never again left me, even though later on, because of a better insight into the causal connections, it lost some of its original poignancy."

Just before the outbreak of World War I, Einstein accepted a professorship at the well-known Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin. The desire to be at the leading center of theoretical physics was momentarily stronger than his antipathy to German militarism. The outbreak of the First World War caught Einstein's wife and two sons in Switzerland, unable to return to Germany. A few years later this enforced separation led to divorce; but on receiving the Nobel Prize in 1921, Einstein, although since remarried, donated the full $50,000 to his first wife and their children. His first son later became a significant figure in civil engineering, holding a professorship at the University of California; but his second son, who idolized his father, in later years to Einstein's great anguish accused his father of having ignored him during his youth.

Einstein, who described himself as a socialist, became convinced that the First World War was largely due to the scheming and incompetence of "the ruling classes," a conclusion with which many contemporary historians agree. He became a pacifist. When other German scientists enthusiastically supported their nation's military enterprises, Einstein publicly condemned the war as "an epidemic delusion." Only his Swiss citizenship prevented him from being imprisoned, as indeed happened to his friend the philosopher Bertrand Russell in England at the same time and for the same reason. Einstein's views on the war did not increase his popularity in Germany.

However, the First World War did, indirectly, play a role in making Einstein's name a household word. In general relativity Einstein explored the proposition—an idea still astonishing in its simplicity, beauty and power—that the gravitational attraction between two masses comes about by those masses distorting or bending ordinary Euclidean space nearby. The quantitative theory reproduced, to the accuracy it had been tested, Newton's law of universal gravitation. But in the next decimal place, so to speak, general relativity predicted significant differences from Newton's views. This is in the classic tradition of science in which the new theories retain the established results of the old, but make a set of new predictions which permit a decisive distinction to be drawn between the two outlooks. The three tests of general relativity which Einstein proposed concerned anomalies in the motion of the orbit of the planet Mercury, the red shifts of the spectral lines of a massive star, and the deflection of starlight near the sun. Before the Armistice was signed in 1918, British expeditions were mustered to Brazil



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and to the island of Principe off West Africa to observe, during a total eclipse of the sun, whether the deflection of starlight was in accord with the predictions of general relativity. It was; Einstein's views were vindicated. The symbolism of a British expedition confirming the work of a German scientist when the two countries were still technically at war appealed to the better instincts of the public.

But at the same time, a well-financed public campaign against Einstein was launched in Germany. Mass meetings with anti-Semitic overtones were staged in Berlin and elsewhere to denounce the relativity theory. Einstein's colleagues were shocked, but most of them, too timid for politics, did nothing to counter the campaign. With the rise of the Nazis in the 1920s and early 1930s, Einstein, against his natural inclination for a life of quiet contemplation, found himself speaking up courageously and often. He testified in German courts on behalf of academics on trial for their political views. He appealed for amnesty for political prisoners in Germany and abroad (including Sacco and Vanzetti and the Scottsboro "boys" in the United States). When Hitler became chancellor in 1933, Einstein and his second wife fled from Germany.

The Nazis burned Einstein's scientific works, and other books by anti-fascist authors, in public bonfires. An all-out assault was launched on Einstein's scientific stature. The attack was led by the Nobel laureate physicist Philipp Lenard, who denounced what he called the "mathematically botched-up theories of Einstein" and the "Asiatic spirit in Science." He went on: "Our Führer has eliminated this same spirit in politics and national economy, where it is known as Marxism. In natural science, however, with the overemphasis on Einstein, it still holds sway. We must recognize that it is unworthy of a German to be the intellectual follower of a Jew. Natural science, properly so-called, is of completely Aryan origin. . . . *Heil Hitler*!"

Many Nazi scholars joined in warning against the "Jewish" and "Bolshevik physics" of Einstein. Ironically, in the Soviet Union at about the same time, prominent Stalinist intellectuals were denouncing relativity as "bourgeois physics."

Einstein's identification of himself as a Jew, despite his profound estrangement from traditional religions, was due entirely to the upsurge of anti-Semitism in Germany in the 1920s. For this reason he also became a Zionist. But, according to his biographer Philipp Frank, not all Zionist groups welcomed Einstein, because he demanded of the Jews an effort to befriend the Arabs and to understand their way of life—a devotion to cultural relativism made more impressive by the difficult emotional issues involved. However, he continued to support Zionism, particularly as the increasing desperation of European Jews became known in the late 1930s. (In 1948, Einstein was offered the presidency of Israel, but politely declined.)

After leaving Germany, Einstein learned that the Nazis had placed a price of 20,000 marks on his head. ("I didn't know it was worth so much.") He accepted an appointment at the recently founded Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, where he remained for the rest of his life. When asked what salary he thought fair, he proposed $3,000. Seeing a look of astonishment pass over the face of the representative of the Institute, he concluded he had proposed too much and suggested a smaller amount. His salary was set at $16,000, a goodly sum for the 1930s.

Einstein's prestige was so high that it was natural for other emigré European physicists in the United States to approach him in 1939 to write a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, proposing the development of an atomic bomb to outstrip a likely German effort to acquire nuclear weapons. Although Einstein had not been working in nuclear physics and later played no role in the Manhattan Project, he wrote the initial letter that led to the establishment of the Manhattan Project. It is likely, however, that the bomb would have been developed by the United States even without Einstein's urging. Despite $E=mc^2$, the discovery of radioactivity by Becquerel and the investigation of the atomic nucleus by Rutherford—both done entirely independently of Einstein—would very likely have led to the development of nuclear weapons. The dread of Nazi Germany which Einstein had experienced had long since caused him, although with considerable pain, to abandon his pacifist views. But when later it transpired that the Nazis had been unable to develop nuclear weapons, Einstein expressed remorse: "Had I known that the Germans would not succeed in developing an atomic bomb, I would have done nothing for the bomb."

Einstein was a powerful defender of civil liberties in the United States during the darkest period of McCarthyism in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Watching the rising tide of hysteria, he had the disturbing feeling that he had seen something similar in Germany in the 1930s. He urged defendants to refuse to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee, saying that every person should be "prepared for jail and economic ruin, . . . for the sacrifice of his personal welfare in the interest of . . . his country." He held that there was "a duty in refusing to cooperate in any undertaking that violates the constitutional rights of the individual. This holds in particular for all inquisitions that are concerned with the private life and the political affiliations of the citizens. . . ." For taking this position, Einstein was widely attacked in the press. And Senator Joseph McCarthy stated in 1953 that anyone who proffers such advice "is himself an enemy of America."

In his Princeton years Einstein's passion remained as always the life of the mind. He worked long and hard on a unified field theory which would combine gravitation, electricity and magnetism on a common basis; but this



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attempt is widely considered to have been unsuccessful. He lived to see his general theory of relativity incorporated as the principal tool for understanding the large-scale structure and evolution of the universe, and would have been delighted to witness the vigorous application of general relativity occurring in astrophysics today. He never grew to understand the reverence with which he was held, and indeed complained that his colleagues and Princeton graduate students would not drop in on him unannounced for fear of disturbing him.

But he wrote: "My passionate interest in social justice and social responsibility has always stood in curious contrast to a marked lack of desire for direct association with men and women. I am a horse for single harness, not cut out for tandem or team work. I have never belonged wholeheartedly to country or State, to my circle of friends or even to my own family. These ties have always been accompanied by a vague aloofness, and the wish to withdraw into myself increases with the years. Such isolation is sometimes bitter, but I do not regret being cut off from the understanding and sympathy of other men. I lose something by it, to be sure, but I am compensated for it in being rendered independent of the customs, opinions and prejudices of others and am not tempted to rest my peace of mind upon such shifting foundations."

His principal recreations throughout his life were playing the violin and sailboating. In these years Einstein looked and in some respects was a sort of aging hippie. He let his white hair grow long and preferred sweaters and a leather jacket to a suit and tie, even when entertaining famous visitors. He was utterly without pretense and, with no affectation, explained that "I speak to everyone in the same way, whether he is the garbage man or the president of the university." He was open to the public, sometimes being willing to help high school students with their geometry problems—and not always successfully.

In matters of religion, Einstein thought more deeply than many others and was repeatedly misunderstood. On the occasion of Einstein's first visit to America, Cardinal O'Connell of Boston warned that the relativity theory "cloaked the ghastly apparition of atheism." This alarmed a New York rabbi who cabled Einstein: "Do you believe in God?" Einstein cabled back: "I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the harmony of all being, not in the God who concerns himself with the fate and actions of men"—a more subtle religious view embraced by many theologians today. Einstein's religious beliefs were very genuine. In the 1920s and 1930s he expressed grave doubts about a basic precept of quantum mechanics: that at the most fundamental level of matter particles behaved in an unpredictable way, as expressed by the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. Einstein said, "God does not play dice with the cosmos." And on another occasion he asserted, "God is subtle but he is not malicious." In fact Einstein was so fond of such aphorisms that the Danish physicist Niels Bohr turned to him on one occasion and with some exasperation said, "Stop telling God what to do." But there were many physicists who felt that if anyone knew God's intentions it was Einstein.

One of the foundations of special relativity is that no material object can travel as fast as light. This light barrier has proved annoying to many people who wish there to be no constraints on what humans might ultimately do. But the light limit permits us to understand in a simple and elegant way much of the world that previously was mysterious. However, where Einstein taketh away he also giveth. There are several consequences of special relativity that seem counterintuitive, contrary to our everyday experience, but they emerge in detectable fashion only when we travel close to the speed of light, a regime of velocity in which common sense has had little experience. One of these consequences is that as we travel sufficiently close to the speed of light time slows down—our wristwatches, our atomic clocks, our biological aging. As a consequence a space vehicle which could travel very close to the speed of light could travel between any two places, no matter how distant, in any conveniently short period of time—as measured on board the spacecraft, but not as measured on the launch planets. We might therefore one day travel to the center of the Milky Way Galaxy and return in a time measured on board the ship in a few decades. But as measured back on earth, the elapsed time will be 60 thousand years, and very few of the friends who saw us off will be around to commemorate our return.

Einstein's last public act was to join with Bertrand Russell and many other scientists and scholars in an unsuccessful attempt to bring about a ban on the development and use of nuclear weapons. He argued that nuclear weapons had changed everything except our way of thinking. In a world divided into hostile states he viewed nuclear energy as the greatest menace to the survival of the human race. "We have the choice," he said, "to outlaw nuclear weapons or face general annihilation. . . . Nationalism is an infantile disease. It is the measles of mankind. . . . Our schoolbooks glorify war and hide its horrors. They inculcate hatred in the veins of children. I would teach peace rather than war. I would inculcate love rather than hate."

At age 67, nine years before his death in 1955, Einstein described his lifelong quest: "Out yonder there was this huge world, which exists independently of us human beings and which stands before us like a great, eternal riddle, at least partially accessible to our inspection and thinking. The contemplation of this world beckoned like a liberation. . . . The road to this paradise was not as comfortable and alluring as the road to the religious paradise; but it has proved itself as trustworthy, and I have never regretted having chosen it."



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# Arts and Lives

## Stanley Kauffmann on films

### Harder Times

Every week of my filmgoing life, my awe of good films grows greater because every week I learn a bit more about how hard it is to make a good one. And it's getting harder all the time. There are a number of new difficulties, not including the rise in costs, and two of those difficulties strangle Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven* (Paramount).

One of them is Beauty, which has become a problem. In the past ten years, approximately, color photography has become so gorgeous that Beauty is now just the place where films begin. This makes the director's job tougher. From Edison onward, film has, in a serious esthetic view, been handicapped as well as helped by the powers of photography. *Any* film, no matter how rotten, will hold us briefly just because it's a film. Whether it's a sales film in a shop window or someone else's home movies, it takes at least a few moments for tedium to overcome the raw mystique of sheer moving pictures. Other arts have to work to get your attention; films begin with your attention. But then they have to hold it. That's the burden: having grabbed you so easily, films have to justify their extravagant powers.

That was true enough for black-and-white and earlier color films, and now Beauty, often breathtaking, is as available to the dumbest film as to the most ambitious. The good director has always sensed that, because of the camera's inherent power, he had to begin further *on*, so to speak, than other artists; now he has to begin further on than that. I spent a day with Fellini when he was shooting his first color film, *Juliet of the Spirits*, and he said he was worried. Up to then he had shown a black-and-white tree and had asked the audience to supply green: now the tree would *be* green and he had to think of something else for the audience to supply. In the '70s, it's worse because even some schlock films are shot gorgeously. The good director has to take Beauty for granted and ask himself, "After that, what?"

Malick never got that far. He brought over Nestor Almendros for this film, a man who has shot some good Truffaut films and some wonderful ones for Rohmer. And Malick has proved, by doing this, the last thing he wanted to prove: there is no such thing as an artist-cinematographer, there are only good cinematographers who sometimes work for artists. You can occasionally see an actor winning out over poor direction (Peter O'Toole in *Brotherly Love*, Paul Scofield in *Bartleby*), but never a cinematographer. The matter of artistic success is quite out of his hands. And when the director is weak, as Malick is here, he tends to lean more and more heavily on the good cinematographer's ability, and so swamps the film in pretty pictures.

*Days of Heaven* is swamped. It begins in a Chicago steel mill—in the Woodrow Wilson era—but it soon moves to an immense wheat farm in the Texas Panhandle. The moment that the film hits open spaces, it starts to stun us. The first spectacular picture is a long shot of a train crossing a trestle, with the train cut in very black silhouette against a light blue sky. A shot like that, early on, makes you hope. But as the film fails to grow and as the stunning pictures continue to flow, the Beauty becomes like a lavish blanket of flowers on a coffin. Horizon sweeps, seas of wheat, sunrises, sunsets pour on and suffocatingly on. (One sign of too-pretty photography is that nothing ever happens at midday, only early or late in the day when the light slants.)

Malick gets so obviously bewildered and unsure as this film wanders along that he leans on picture-taking desperately. (He even brought in another noted cinematographer, Haskell Wexler, to do additional work.) It gets ludicrous. A man drops a wineglass in a stream, so we see the glass underwater. Seeds are planted, so we see one of those science-film hurry-up shots in which a seed sprouts. Clearly Malick wanted to integrate this landscape and these seasons with his drama, but the drama is so vapid that the integration is lopsided. The story soon becomes background for the scenery.

Which brings us to the second new hazard that hits Malick: modernity in the script. This isn't a matter only, or mainly, of sex and liberated language: it's the presumed imperative to bring film-writing into line with modern fiction and drama through ellipsis and obliqueness and astringency, plus truth-telling about established genres. The overall intent is anti the old Hollywood.

Now this impulse is not arbitrarily bad any more than is fine photography. But the notion that modernity in itself pays all debts to characterization and structure and force, that it licenses offhandedness and self-indulgence, is crippling. Two examples of the phenomenon at its worst are Thomas McGuane's script for *The Missouri Breaks* and James Toback's for *The Gambler*. On the other hand one of the best examples of "modern" film-writing is Malick's script for *Pocket Money* (which he didn't direct). Then he slipped with his *Badlands* script (which he did direct) because he made facile *Angst*-assumptions, but at least he kept the film steady and gave it shape. Now he's written (and directed) a script so mopily terse, so emptily portentous that it ends up as just a tony graduate-student gesture against old movies.

### Films Worth Seeing

*Cat and Mouse.* More sex than suspense in this pleasant (!) French murder mystery.

*Girlfriends.* Independent filmmaker Claudia Weill has made an independent film. It walks right up to the platitudes about young women today and walks right through them to affecting truth.

*Go Tell the Spartans.* Vietnam very early—1964. Despite war-movie trappings, some grip on the complexities and horrible ironies.

*Heaven Can Wait.* Remember *Here Comes Mr. Jordan?* Here he comes again, with adequate sentimental charm.

SK



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As in *Badlands* Malick uses a voice-over narration by a young girl with an odd voice. In *Badlands* it was Sissy Spacek; here it's Linda Manz, whose urban-tough slurring I often couldn't understand. The story is about a Chicago steelworker who gets in an (unexplained) scrape and runs off with his little sister and with his girl friend who poses as another sister. They all get harvesting work on a wheat farm, with a main house right out of George Stevens's *Giant*. The young farmer falls in love with the older girl and asks all three to stay on. He's dying of cancer, for no necessary dramatic reason. He marries the older girl, and he's apparently the only person in Texas who doesn't know that she's not the other fellow's sister. All this is told with what is supposed to be Knut Hamsun starkness, but it comes out just a lot of disconnected poses and mumbles. One of the most embarrassing episodes is an interlude cribbed pictorially from Fellini in which two aerial acrobats and a cooch dancer fly in and stay a while. Eventually, death comes to both lovers of the "older sister," not tragically and not a moment too soon.

The one member of the cast worth comment is Sam Shepard, who is also the best practicing American playwright I know. Shepard, who has acted before but not in films, is the farmer. His lean and troubled face brings this picture as close as it ever gets to drama.

All that Malick seems to care about is not to seem to care too much, which he apparently thinks will be ultra cool in the middle of scenic splendor. But this stance leaves us not caring much, either. The last moment of *Pocket Money* is a gem of a scene in which the picture slides off the screen on a minor note, perfectly in keeping with the chromatic key in which the story has been developed (*developed*) up to then. The last moment of *Days of Heaven* mimics that previous ending, but it comes out only mannerism because mannerism is all that we've had before it. Mannerism, fragments, unpregnant silences.

It's always been a director's first and hardest job to "keep the picture in his head," as they say, while he's shooting it. These two new burdens, Beauty and hipness, make it even harder. Malick is just plain lost.

The Hungarian director Márta Mészáros is stratospherically above Malick in talent and security, but she too has problems. *Women* (New Yorker) is, I think, her first film to be released here, and it immediately shows understanding, compassion, sureness of touch. Her cinematographer, János Kende, is known here for his work with Mészáros's husband, Miklós Jancso: Kende's work is delicate and is discreetly used by the director. The editing is acute: Mészáros leads us just enough, without snappiness, and her cuts answer our questions just as they come to us. She places her camera with a good sense of where it will best serve the moment and the story as a whole. It's a long time since I've seen so many large close-ups that do not seem exclamatory or strained. Mészáros implies: "My reason for making this film is, literally, to look closely at these people." She does it so gently that she seems not to be disturbing them.

But the script, which begins by engaging us, gradually dwindles into mere symmetry, schematic and quasi-polemical. The authors, Ildikó Koródy, József Balazs, and Géza Beremenyi, are not loaded down with the obligatory hipness described above, but they do have a revisionist, anti-traditional thesis: the changing status of wives. There are two principal wives: the fortyish manager of a women's labor hostel, Marina Vlady, and one of the residents, Lili Monori, a woman of 30 with a child. The child is not supposed to live in the hostel, and the film begins with a tussle between the sympathetic but firm Vlady and the fractious but appealing Monori. The tussle metamorphoses into a bond between them when they learn that they both have unsatisfactory husbands. Each woman has a sex scene with her husband in which he climaxes and she does not; each has marital difficulties of different kinds that are shown to be the husband's fault; each finds more understanding with the other woman than with her husband. That all this is relatively common I don't doubt, but the handling of this story seems more retributive than just. Unlike Agnes Varda's *One Sings, The Other Doesn't*, Mészáros's film seems more concerned with revenge for decades of male-oriented films than with a general spectrum of truths about men and women.

But it's exceptionally well made. Vlady—dubbed in Hungarian?—has become a really touching actress. She was lovely as a superseded royal mistress in Tavernier's *Let Joy Reign Supreme*, she is lovely here as a minor Communist official trying to resist wear and tear. The scene of farewell to her dead

Comparative Financial Review

| | Years ended December 31, 1977 | 1976 |
|---|---|---|
| Income | | |
| Life premiums | $22,340,297 | $16,150,742 |
| Accident and health premiums | 25,683,413 | 23,593,214 |
| Investment and other income | 4,799,481 | 4,090,525 |
| Total income | 52,823,191 | 43,834,481 |
| Benefits and expenses | | |
| Life claims and other benefits | 4,126,231 | 3,735,055 |
| Accident and health claims | 12,430,024 | 11,644,002 |
| Increase in liability for future policy benefits | 12,196,239 | 8,711,984 |
| Amortization of policy acquisition costs | 5,183,133 | 4,431,061 |
| Commissions | 5,943,151 | 5,224,771 |
| General expenses and insurance taxes | 5,869,697 | 5,652,642 |
| Dividends to policyholders | 298,064 | 299,032 |
| | 46,046,539 | 39,698,547 |
| Income before income taxes and realized investment gains (losses) | 6,776,652 | 4,135,934 |
| Provision for income taxes | | |
| Current | — | — |
| Deferred | 1,909,150 | 1,209,252 |
| Income before realized investment gains (losses) | 4,867,502 | 2,926,682 |
| Realized investment gains (losses) | 11,364 | 356,057 |
| Net income | $ 4,878,866 | $ 3,282,739 |
| Earnings per share | | |
| Income before realized investment gains (losses) | $ 2.88 | $ 1.76 |
| Realized investment gains (losses) | .01 | .21 |
| Net income | $ 2.89 | $ 1.97 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Assets | $116,000,000 |
| Insurance in Force | $ 1,289,000 |

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mother, in a room soaked in Middle Europe, is perfect. Monori, twisted, rodent-like, sexy, gives a performance of aggressive anguish.

The first that I heard Mészáros's name was from Jancsó in New York some years ago, when he took a good deal of time to praise his then unknown wife. (A nicely wry memory after this film about unappreciative husbands.) Two of her films before *Women* won festival prizes. I've just read that, after seeing the picture that follows *Women*, Jancsó said, "She's a genius of a director." True or not, and despite the lapses noted above, more Mészáros, please.

# Michael Ullman on jazz

## The T.E.C.O.J.R.C.C.O.B.W.O.T.C.A.N.O.M.S., the Hongy Tongy Hokey Pokey and other Curiosities

In conjunction with the Newport in New York Festival, Rutgers University's Institute of Jazz Studies held an all-day seminar during which researchers and jazz historians presented some of their discoveries and talked about the problems of their work. I attended the morning session on Art Tatum and Benny Carter.

Previously I had been to only one "academic" jazz conference, a much less professional affair sponsored by the University of Michigan's radio station. That meeting featured a group of teenagers who talked about Dixieland and suggested that true jazz had come to a bad end in the 1940s (sometime before they were born), a man who played some rare tapes of Count Basie performances and commented on the power of the band, and the inevitable bebopper, a stringy-haired youth who hung around corridors snagging people to hear his cassette recording of the ultimate Charlie Parker solo and who, I discovered, was obsessed with what seemed to him to be the unnatural number of manhole covers littering the streets of Detroit. The audience for these talks was composed largely of cheerful eccentrics: repeatedly during that day individuals sidled up to me, looked fondly over to their peers and commented on their strangeness. I particularly remember one middle-aged man dressed normally according to my relaxed standards, except that he had a string around his neck over which he draped his tie. He had a button announcing that he was a member of what I remember as T.E.C.O.J.R.C.C.O.B.W.O.T.C.A.N.O.M.S. (the East Columbus Ohio Jazz Record Collectors Club One Block West of the Cemetery and North of Main Street). This individual carried both a tape recorder and a camera and he taped everything. I remember discussing my freshman English class with a friend and turning around to see the East Columbian open-mouthed behind us, microphone in hand. To some this seminar was a social affair or a learning experience; to others a joke. To him it was history. I asked him at one point if he were enjoying himself; he looked perplexed and pained. Clearly he couldn't tell until he had replayed his tapes.

Drawing by Michael Crawford

The Rutgers seminar took place at Waterloo Village, a delightful park in Stanhope, New Jersey, where the Newport Festival held several early evening concerts. Throughout the talks the sounds of King Oliver's music drifted over the tents where we sat: the New York Jazz Repertory Company was conducting an open rehearsal of the music they were to recreate that evening. Four people spoke in the morning session that I attended, all introduced by Dan Morgenstern, ex-editor of *Downbeat* and now Director of the Jazz Institute: Morroe Berger, a professor of sociology at Princeton and his son Ed, Curator of the Jazz Institute, talked about their forthcoming biography of saxophonist Benny Carter; and Arnold Laubich, a real estate man who spends much of his time researching the life of Art Tatum, spoke with musicologist Felicity Howlett about aspects of Tatum's life and music.

Benny Carter is a debonair, modest man, a superb alto saxophonist and trumpet player who led one of the best big bands of the 1940s and who is well known as a composer and arranger. The Bergers have been haunting him for years now. Morroe Berger recalled Carter's initial bemusement at their activities, which include a successful search through Carter's closets for forgotten tapes and records. Inevitably they discovered some things Carter might have wanted to forget: they played a tape of a syrupy Benny Carter vocal on a tune called "Happy-Go-Lucky You and Broken-Hearted Me" that Carter recorded under the pseudonym Clarence Clump. The Bergers have traced 21 recorded vocals and over a thousand other Carter solos, and they noted that 238 of his compositions are "on wax." They directed us to sources of recondite Carter material: he arranged "That's for Me" for Pat Boone to sing in the soundtrack of *State Fair*, as well as a song strangely entitled "Hongy Tongy Hokey Pokey" for Gordon McCrae. One hopes McCrae appreciated the favor.

As Dan Morgenstern noted, the Bergers are in some sense professional jazz scholars—but jazz scholarship has often been done by talented and tireless amateurs who were once transfixed by a sound or inspired by a musical personality. Arnold Laubich did not speak of the first time he heard the piano of Art Tatum, but he did mention how many people he has met who remember vividly their first experience with his music. (As if to prove Laubich's point, someone in the audience, an ex-member of the Cleveland Browns who was befriended by Tatum, spoke of the first time he heard his music.) Laubich and Howlett are working on a critical biography, with Howlett providing the musical analysis and Laubich much of the basic information. In this seminar, Howlett spoke about the apparently simple improvisation on "Jitterbug Waltz" (Pablo Records), justifying



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Tatum's ornamentation by stressing his almost infinite ability to vary the complex runs to which he was addicted. Besides playing some extremely rare Tatum, Laubich constructed a "conversation" between Tatum and himself by arranging into a logical sequence segments of taped interviews with Tatum. He asked questions of the tape recorder: the voice of Tatum responded, and so Arnold Laubich was able to have a public talk with his idol. As others relaxed after the session, Laubich ran around with a tape recording of the rarest of Tatum performances—issued only in Argentina—that features a band but claims to be a piano solo. Laubich was trying to identify the trumpet soloist—Joe Newman suggested that it might be Doc Cheatham, thus sending the author away on another lead. Bessie Smith used to say that she could "walk" a man, compel him by her song to approach her. This seminar at Rutgers University indicated that there are many fans and scholars whose lives are still walking to the beat of their favorite jazz performers.

# Books Considered

## Speak for the Dead
## by Rex Burns

(Harper & Row; $8.95)

*Speak for the Dead*, a detective story by Rex Burns, doesn't begin with a complete and traditional corpse but only the head of a young woman. It is discovered toppled over in the Botanic Gardens of Denver, where it had been planted, hair combed, in a picturesque setting.

Gradually, through the methodical labors of detective Gabriel Wager, we learn that this head—drained of blood, hideously gray, unbearable to look at—belonged recently to a pretty woman, a model, someone we liked to look at.

As detective Wager interviews people who knew the woman, we learn more and more about her life and character. She was austere, rational, orderly, practical, persistent, independent, and ambitious. Ironically, it might be said she was headstrong, and, early on it is implied that however insane her murder seems, the act was not gratuitous. Perhaps, from the murderer's point of view, cutting off her head was exceedingly apt, if not precisely reasonable. A gesture of demonic adoration inspired by the woman's character.

Since I'd be unfair to future readers of the book if I gave away too much of its specific content, I'll continue discussing it only in more or less speculative terms. The murdered woman, then, as I'm trying to suggest, seems to have provoked her antithetical reflection in her murderer; that is, his act flows more from her character than his own. When he kills her and places her head in the garden—at great trouble and risk to himself—he recreates her in an idealized picture. A memorial. A sort of vicious shrine. The head now represents her insufferable will. The surrounding garden is her luscious body. Her actual body—because it answered to her will, not his—he dumps in a junk yard.

Although this novel violates no detective story conventions—even the category of dismembered bodies isn't new—it contains unusual complexities of meaning and form. While turning the pages, impelled by its good story, you find yourself actually *reading* the novel and you notice that Rex Burns makes good sentences, one right after another You also notice, during the detective's interviews with several interestingly realized characters, that the original ugly head becomes a pretty girl, then a competent woman, then a powerfully attractive, beautiful, self-obsessed and infuriatingly ambitious person. Head, girl, woman, person—in the course of the novel she develops and transforms in the memories of those who knew her. She comes to life until she is, in a sense, murdered again and memorialized. Her final transformation is given mainly through the mind of her murderer, in whose maniacal vision her character becomes her fate.

Eventually you also notice, though it is not a salient dramatic feature of the novel, that the woman's character is remarkably like detective Wager's. He too is rational, persistent, and determined to be himself. He infuriates his colleagues just by doing his job very properly, knowing the rules of police bureaucracy, and, however difficult and tedious, adhering to established procedures. They think he is too ambitious.

The parallel between the victim and the detective is important because it gives a strange resonance to his investigative passion. He seems almost to search for the murderer of himself, the one responsible for his own ruined, lonely life, so much of which is invested in correctitude, in his own—so to speak—severed head. Though Wager adheres compulsively to correct investigative procedures, it is clear that he struggles to understand the meaning of what happened, not merely to collect so-called facts and make an arrest.

In a detective novel of this kind, where everything depends on knowing about the victim, the ultimate mystery is in the metaphysics of biography or the murderous nexus of character and fate. If the beautiful murdered woman can be said to create her murderer—just as he later recreates her in the garden—then the murder itself, in its combination of


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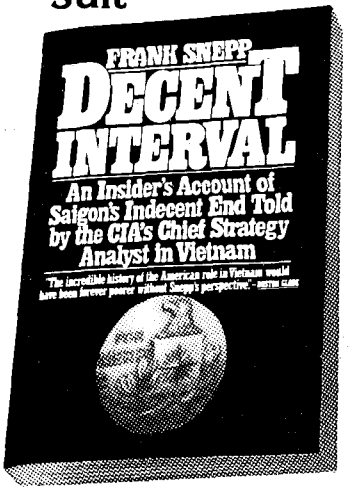
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violence and ritual—is the punishment that defines *her* crime—which is that she lived. For this particular crime, all of us have been sentenced to death, but some of us have been apparently more so than others.

Revisionists of Freudian theory now claim we are the authors of our own biographies. They mean there are few, if any, neutral events in our lives. Whatever happens to us—even our dreams—we determine. In this view our murderers become our darkest instruments, our creatures, ourselves. Using the conventions of a minor and infinitely exploited literary form, Rex Burns has made a very fascinating modern book.

**Leonard Michaels**

*Leonard Michaels* is the author of *I Would Have Saved Them If I Could* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

## Shosha
## by Isaac Bashevis Singer

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $8.95)

*Shosha* is Isaac Bashevis Singer's most personal novel. Aaron Greidinger, the narrator and protagonist, is very much a fictional surrogate of the author, the autobiographical material being at some points vividly transmogrified, at others, only thinly disguised. Like Singer, Greidinger is a Yiddish writer who begins his career in Warsaw during the 1930s; raised in a Hasidic home, he concocts a tentative and personal post-traditional mysticism out of the Kabbalah and its offshoots, out of Spinoza, Nietzsche, Veihinger, and other miscellaneous readings. The novels in which he discovers his literary vocation are, like Singer's *Satan in Goray* and *The Slave*, based on the pseudo-messianic upheavals that convulsed the Jewish world around 1660 and again, more locally, in the 1740s; and like Singer, he is fascinated with the dizzying perspectives opened by antinomian license and with the obsessional power of eroticism. He, too, escapes the Nazi invasion of Poland and makes his way to America, though six years later than his author and by a different geographical route, and eventually he becomes a celebrated writer in English translation. Singer even lends Greidinger his premature baldness and his vegetarianism, and at moments he actually parodies himself in this fictional figure—most clearly, in Greidinger's first extended effort as a writer, an artistic shambles of a play called *The Ludmir Maiden* about a young woman (a historical figure) who became a Hasidic *rebbe* and who in Greidinger's abortive drama is loved simultaneously by two different dybbuks, one a musician, the other a harlot.

A blurb-writer might say that *Shosha* "recaptures" the Warsaw of Singer's youth, but the book has no nostalgic softness because it is so consciously a novel about the process of remembering—remembering as the source and perhaps the justification of all literary activity, remembering as the mind's intimation of time stopped or time reversed and thus a token of performance in a violent chaotic universe. The cast of significant characters is limited, but in many scenes, especially when the 30-year-old writer repeatedly goes back to the Krochmalna Street of his boyhood—a return within the return that is the novel—Singer conveys a sense of the teeming particularities of Polish-Jewish life reminiscent of the best things in his two compendious family chronicles, *The Manor* and *The Family Moskat*.

The pursuit of the past is translated into a central principle of plot in Greidinger's relationship with Shosha. She was his intimate childhood friend in the poor and pious Jewish neighborhood of Krochmalna Street, and when he rediscovers her as an adult, still a slip of a girl, scarcely full-grown, retarded in mind as well as in body, she seems to him the embodiment of arrested, or perhaps perpetuated, childhood. "Had Shosha found a magical way to stop the advance of time?" Greidinger wonders after he meets her again. "Was this the secret of love or the power of retrogression?" Whichever, he is mesmerized by this innocent girl-woman, and he soon renounces the four amorous interests that he has been maintaining, more or less at the same time, to devote himself to Shosha, who needs him even more urgently than he needs her.

Now, all of this verges on allegory, and that is a basic problem of the novel. Shosha's very name fits into the design: it suggests the Hebrew word for rose, perhaps the mystical-allegorical designation of Israel as *Shoshanat Ya'akov*, the Rose of Jacob, and, more apposite to the major theme of the book, the rose that does not wither, that is beyond the ravages of time. To possess this fragile flower, Greidinger is prepared to sever his social connections with the world of Yiddish writers, to neglect his material well-being, even to sacrifice his life: because of Shosha, he is prevailed upon to flee Warsaw only at the last moment, while she, still umbilically tied to Krochmalna Street, dies enigmatically and conveniently on the road, "like Mother Rachel." To be sure, the eternally innocent Shosha has her poignant moments in the novel, but she strikes this reader at any rate as too vague, too much a mere idea, and the overwhelming attraction she holds for the intellectual Greidinger is no more than intermittently credible. In order to create a plausible relationship between two such disparate figures, a novelist would have to have the psychological genius of a Dostoevski or the insight into the metamorphic power of imagination of a Nabokov. Singer's own gifts lie elsewhere—in the evocation of cultural character-types and settings, in the embodiment of metaphysical speculation in the destinies of fictional personages.

And yet, Singer, here as elsewhere, is so *beguiling* a writer that one readily forgives the flaws of his work. The sketchiness in the psychological definition of character is abundantly compensated for by the writer's ability repeatedly to dramatize, in the full concreteness of the fictional moment, the movements of the contemplative mind as it ponders man's imponderable place in the infinite scheme of things. In this regard, *Shosha* at its best recalls one of Singer's finest stories, "The Spinoza of Market Street." For example, Greidinger on the evening of his wedding stands at a window looking out at the fierce blizzard that has transformed the street into sliding hills and valleys of snow. "What are the sparrows doing now? I wondered. According to Spinoza, the frost, the birds, and I were all modes of the same substance. But one mode whistled, whined, and drove a cold wave from the North Pole; a second hid in a hole in a wall, shivering and starving; a third was



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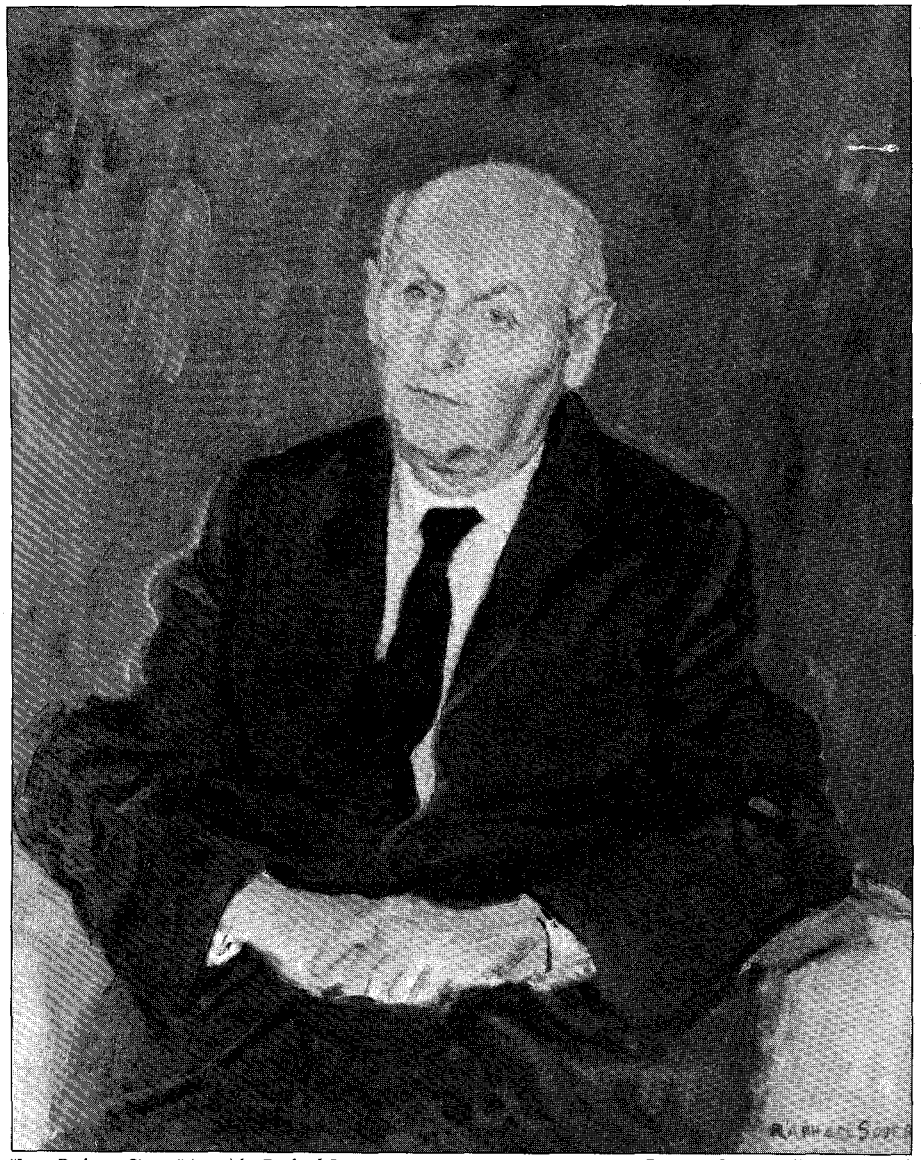

"Isaac Bashevis Singer" (1971) by Raphael Soyer — Courtesy Forum Gallery, New York

getting ready to marry Shosha."

Metaphysical speculation, anchored in this fashion in individual character and situation, retains something of its intrinsic intellectual breadth but is both enlivened and ironically qualified by a wry sense of the discrepancies between systems, concepts, logical reasoning, on the one hand, and the stubborn particularities of existence, on the other. As a writer of metaphysical fiction, Singer is thus the exact obverse of J.L. Borges. Borges creates *ficciones* that are ingenious parables devised to unsettle conventional notions of time, space, extension, causation, identity. Singer, faithful to the Yiddish literary tradition from which he derives, adheres mimetically to the gritty surfaces of a closely observed world but surrounds that world with vertiginous mental prospects against which human lives and their impedimenta waver, wobble, vanish, only to reappear with an assertive irreducibility.

This double movement of imaginative expansion and contraction is nicely traced in the final moment of the novel. The successful Greidinger, in a postwar epilogue to the main action, makes a visit to Israel, where he meets Haiml Chentshiner, one of his old Warsaw friends. Naturally enough, the two fill each other in on what has happened to them and to others of their circle during the intervening years of genocidal calamity, and then they muse over the inscrutable fact of time past. "There must be a place somewhere," Chentshiner says, "where everything is preserved, inscribed down to the smallest detail." Even so minuscule an event as a single spider consuming a single fly (instructively, the example he chooses is an act of destruction) must not be forgotten under the aspect of eternity or "it would create a blemish in the universe." The two men, two sufferers mourning their lost ones, sit in the darkness of a cramped immigrant's apartment outside Tel Aviv "waiting for an answer," as they explain to


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Chentshiner's puzzled wife, who asks what they are doing there with the light turned off. In the preceding narrative, Singer may have made a tactical error in introducing Shosha as one symbolic "answer" to the quandary of human transience, but in other ways the novel succeeds in plangently rendering the process of questioning the place of man in the frightful flux of being, and that is what gives conviction to this literary pursuit of a vanished past.

**Robert Alter**

*Robert Alter*, professor of comparative literature at Berkeley, wrote *Defenses of the Imagination* (Jewish Publication Society).

## The North Will Rise Again: Pensions, Politics and Power in the 1980s by Jeremy Rifkin and Randy Barber

(Beacon Press; $4.95)

It is the bottom of the eighth inning, and the home team is losing. The banks, insurance companies, and multinational corporations are in control of the game, moving capital to the Sunbelt and overseas, leaving the economies of the northern states in disarray, and eroding the gains made over generations by organized labor.

Time is running out, but on the sidelines, cheerleaders Jeremy Rifkin and Randy Barber are not ready to give up. Clapping their hands and exhorting their team to rally, they have a strategy to produce a thrilling come-from-behind victory. It goes something like this:

American workers have a hidden weapon: the $500 billion in pension funds which has become the largest source of investment capital in the US. The funds own 20 to 25 percent of the equity in American corporations and 40 percent of the bonds. Forty percent of that $500 billion comes from pension funds for labor union members and public employees in the 16 northern and midwestern states of the "Graybelt." Instead of letting the financial community manage the money in ways which move jobs and tax revenues out of the North, unions and state governments could claim control over their own wealth and invest it in their own communities, creating worker-owned or public corporations.

The fact that their team's coaches don't have any other viable strategy up their sleeves is one of the strongest arguments for Rifkin's and Barber's plan. The authors contend that labor's traditional weapons—strikes, boycotts, political action, and organizing drives—are increasingly becoming ineffective against multinational corporations capable of manipulating resources across state and national boundaries. The Sunbelt's political power—already strong enough to block labor law reform—will grow stronger with the reapportionment of Congress following the 1980 census, and will continue to be used to advance the causes of big business. Under those circumstances, the federal government cannot be relied on to bail out the North.

Their plan, say Rifkin and Barber, is the only one which might succeed. Unions—whose members are concentrated in the North—should demand that both private pension funds for their members and funds for public employees be invested in unionized companies, state and local services, worker-owned enterprises, and other socially useful programs such as low and middle-income housing.

The authors cite reports, studies, and newspaper and magazine articles to answer some of the obvious objections to their proposals. While noting, for instance, that the 1974 federal pension reform act requires funds' trustees to try to get the best possible return on investment, they show that trustees could do so without turning over funds' management to financial institutions which now frequently invest in non-union "runaway" companies. In fact, they argue, the rate of return obtained on pension funds by outside financial managers has actually been *lower* than average rates of return obtained by other investors, in part because banks and other managers put their own interests and those of the client corporations ahead of those of the workers.

As cheerleaders trying to create momentum for a new approach, Rifkin and Barber occasionally overstate the significance of certain events. They are usually careful to cover themselves by qualifying their claims, but they don't dwell as much as they should on the considerable obstacles their plan faces.

Much is made, for example, of Machinists' president William Winpisinger's threat to move millions of dollars of pension money out of Manufacturers Hanover because the bank has invested in the non-union J. P. Stevens Co. But there is no mention of the highly illuminating fact that Winpisinger has so far been unsuccessful in carrying out his threat. The authors quote the union head as saying that if banks continue to use union funds to undermine union interests, "I'm going to tell them to get packing." The problem is that, as Rifkin and Barber acknowledge elsewhere in the book, Winpisinger and other union leaders don't have the direct authority to tell funds' trustees to do anything. Under restrictions written into federal law more than 30 years ago, employers must have at least 50 percent control over pension fund administration. Most unions, including those like the Auto Workers and Steelworkers which deal with some of the largest private pension funds in the US, have no role in funds' administration at all.

How can unions persuade employers to invest pension funds the way unions want? According to Rifkin and Barber, "It would not take much convincing for management trustees to see the advantage of voting along with the union in its attempt to pressure a nonunion company into accepting a union shop . . . in order to improve (the unionized employer's) competitive cost position." The fact is that it will take a *great deal* of convincing at a time when companies from General Motors on down are increasingly hostile to unions and are lowering costs by setting up their own nonunion operations outside the North. To persuade their employers, unions will have to use the same weapons Rifkin and Barber say are growing ineffective, such as strikes to back up collective bargaining demands. To gain the legal right to bargain for full control over pension funds would require a successful lobbying campaign for an act of Congress, a tactic the authors say no longer works.

A few other important questions seem to be ignored by the authors. From both the divisive title and the text of the book, it appears that Rifkin and Barber see no choice but to write off the



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southern worker. What about *their* pension funds? What sorts of alliances could be built between northern and southern workers to use their combined strength to mutual advantage? Can a regional solution work for the North? If the motivation for runaway companies is the search for low labor standards and taxes, how will the northern businesses financed with pension fund money compete—unless they pay the same low wages and enjoy the same freedom from regulation? Can the North afford to provoke an even more rapid exodus of private capital?

There are also a number of minor flaws born of overenthusiasm in *The North Will Rise Again*, but this is not a book which should be judged on the fine print. By raising in a coherent argument the broad issue of control of pension funds, and by linking it to the future of the labor movement and the northern states, Rifkin and Barber could fundamentally change the game plan of those who seek to defeat the conservative forces in the US. Whether their ideas can be implemented remains to be seen.

**Matt Witt**

*Matt Witt* is former editor of the *United Mine Workers Journal*.

## Mosquitoes, Malaria and Man
## by Gordon Harrison

(E.P. Dutton; $15.00)

Forty years ago malaria killed at least half the people who died each year. It was a scourge not only in colonial areas but in southern Europe as well. The U.S. South had more than one million cases per year. Eradicated from the U.S. and Europe after World War II, it quite naturally receded from our consciousness. But malaria, Gordon Harrison tells us in this fascinating, richly documented and carefully-written book, is still alive. We had better not turn our backs on it.

The immediate cause of malaria is a single-celled, amoeboid organism that crawls into red blood cells to feed on hemoglobin and multiply. When depleted, the red blood cells burst, releasing huge numbers of parasites to reinfect still more cells. Each explosive release of parasites causes debilitating fever and chills. If the individual was initially healthy, his immune system will eventually force the parasite into dormancy in the liver, but residual anemia and exhaustion will leave him vulnerable to other diseases and to a recurrence of the malarial cycle as the immune response wanes. One species of the organism, Plasmodium falciparum, often kills quickly because it causes a "stickiness" on the red cell membrane. Binding to each other and to blood vessel walls, the infected cells fatally clog vessels in the liver and brain.

There is also a sexual stage in the life cycle of Plasmodium. This is crucial since the sexual recombination of genetic material is what accounts for Plasmodium's great adaptability–the ease, for example, with which it develops drug resistance. Fertilization occurs in the stomach of the Anopheles mosquito after it has fed on a human with an active infection. The fertile mother cells migrate to the outer wall of the mosquito's stomach where they replicate vigorously. The progeny then swim to the salivary gland, the syringe by which Plasmodium is injected intravenously into its next human host.

When I dutifully memorized the details of this cycle in freshman zoology, I never once wondered how—with what effort—these facts were discovered. Gordon Harrison tells the whole story. Relying on the original scientific papers, memoirs and letters of the principal investigators, he skillfully reconstructs for us the intellectual and social process by which malaria's proximal cause and mechanism of transmission were established. From 1880 when the Frenchman, Laveran, described Plasmodium in human blood, until 1898 when Ross, an Englishman in India, proved that mosquitoes carry bird malaria, and an Italian group led by Grassi pinned human malaria on Anopheles, there was a protracted race to discovery. Ross won the race and a Nobel prize.


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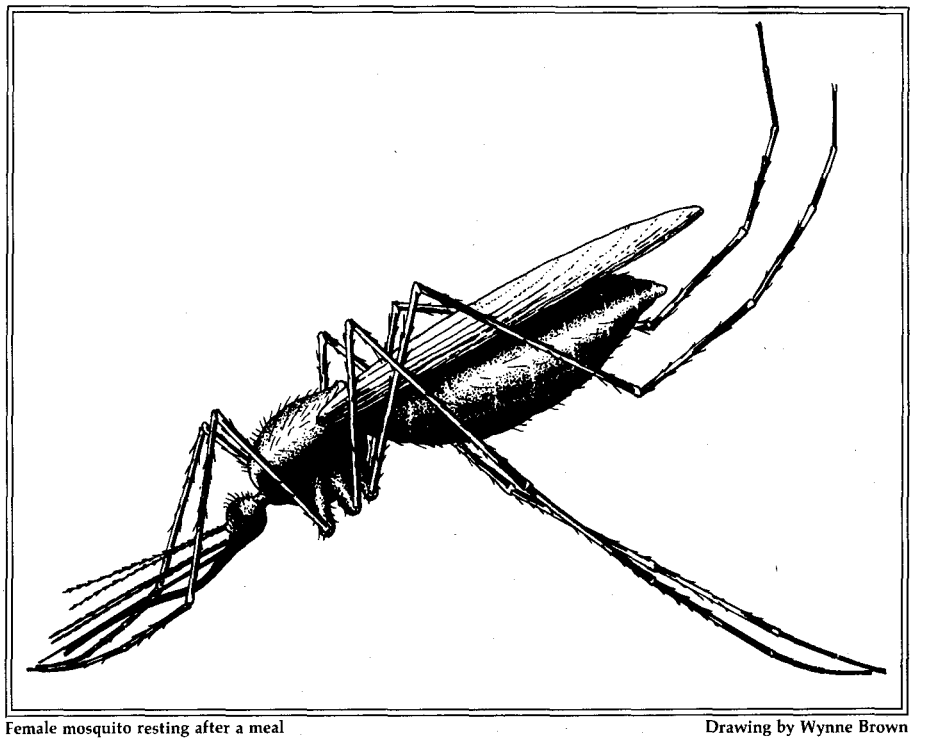
Harrison makes clear that this race had a special structure. To get credit for each bit of progress, its discoverer had first to publish his findings. Yet the new fact often aided his competitors by providing them with a crucial insight while leaving the discoverer in new confusion, straining for his next perception or intuition. An investigator would repeat—and repeat—apparently pointless observations until a chance variation produced a clue he could use. Ross, for example, dissected thousands of mosquito stomachs before "stumbling" on one that looked different; it bore the crucial oöcysts on its outer wall. He found sporozoites in the salivary gland by idly pulling the head off a mosquito rather than, as was his custom, dissecting the body carefully. Harrison's fine account of the scientific process shows that discovery, though disorderly, is inexorable: there is no way for the malarial cycle or any other of Nature's mechanisms to escape our understanding once it has been targeted for this kind of cooperative-competitive investigation. It is what our culture does best.

It is clear to Harrison, though it never was to my zoology teacher, that the impetus for the race between scientists was the colonial imperative: "The doctors who first fought malaria in the tropics went out explicitly to challenge the mosquito for the possession of rich lands. . . ." Colonial whites and their darker workers were dying like flies. Ironically, almost every feature of the world transformation with which they were occupied encouraged the flies themselves and the Plasmodium by destroying the adaptations the human race had evolved through the ages before the 19th century.

For example, the inhabitants of malarial regions had evolved genetic variations in hemoglobin that made their red cells inhospitable to Plasmodium. This not only conferred resistance on the individuals bearing the genes but probably helped the community by reducing the concentration of potential malaria carriers, and thus the chance of infecting the local Anopheles. There were also cultural adaptations. I noticed on a recent visit to Panama that the Chocó Indians in the Darien jungle build their houses on stilts, about six feet off the ground, with thatched roofs and no walls so that the interiors are relatively light and airy. Anopheles flies low and prefers dark and humid shelters. The Chocó lived until recently not in villages, but in widely scattered, single family groups; transfer of infection is favored by large concentrations of people. The Chocó's varied diet and peaceful life encourage a strong immune response.



Female mosquito resting after a meal

Drawing by Wynne Brown

Harrison does not sufficiently explore the effectiveness of these precolonial adaptations, but the changes the 19th century brought to Panama and the rest of the tropical and subtropical world clearly upset them. Masses of workers were shuttled through the world, some carrying malaria to places where it had never been (Mauritius, for example). Others, lacking natural resistance, and living in high concentration near agricultural or construction projects (the Canal) by their sheer number swamped the genetically adapted populations. These new workers slept on the open ground or in low, fetid huts where Anopheles grazed. They were worked from dawn to dusk and were fed on meager and nutritionally restricted diets, conditions which, to understate the matter, do not favor a strong immune response. Harrison says that some Italian scientists, such as Celli, even after the "cause" of malaria was known, urged reform of such living and working conditions as the first line of attack on the scourge.

If I had no inkling of any of this as a student in 1958, it was partly because the 80-year war between science and malaria seemed all but won by the latest technological advance, DDT. The body count indicated light at the end of the tunnel: in 1951, 75 million people in India were infected, but by 1961 there were only 50,000 cases, a mere dribble. Malaria must have launched its new offensive in Southeast Asia roughly around Tet, 1968 because by 1977 India again had an estimated 30-50 million cases. Strains of Anopheles resistant to DDT have developed the world over as have strains of Plasmodium (including the deadly falciparum) resistant to the various synthetic forms of quinine. The war against malaria is just now going badly.

Unfortunately, Harrison ends his story at this point. For him it "offers no simple meanings." He evaluates none of the current scientific approaches to malaria, neither the attempts to develop a vaccine against Plasmodium, nor the latest tricks of insect control, such as trapping them with their own "pheromones" (chemical sex-attractants). Nor does Harrison speak frankly of the politics of malaria prevention. There is no discussion for example of the obvious similarities in the conduct and outcome of the two concurrent wars in Southeast Asia, the one on malaria, the other on Vietnam. This is astonishing since the two were intertwined. At the most superficial level, drug-resistant malaria added to U.S. difficulties in Vietnam and was the focus of much DOD-sponsored research.

At the deepest level, the meanings of both wars seem identical. We have two complex systems—men and malaria. Both are endlessly flexible, men by virtue of their intelligence and emotional responsiveness, mosquitoes and Plasmodium by virtue of their



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genetic variability and staggering reproductive rate. The technology that *looks* so impressive is, by comparison to these systems, crude: the effect of a synthetic chemical developed at great effort can be undone by a single mutation. Harrison notes how poorly people were organized in the antimalarial campaigns—houses went unsprayed, blood smears went unchecked. Technicians, like infantry, get bored when they have no sense of involvement. But Vietnamese guerrillas did not get bored. Chinese peasants with a sense of purpose suppressed the scourges of China—schistosomiasis, flies, and sparrows. No technology, just passion. Barefoot Chinese doctors with little education set up microscopes at village wells so that the people might *see* the need to boil water, and feel it as a commitment. Mutual commitment is more fundamental than technology. It won the war for the Vietnamese and its absence lost the war against malaria.

Harrison writes sadly but with no outrage at the dwindling resources available to deal with this greatest modern scourge. It is too painful for him, I suppose, to calculate the years of anti-malaria wars that could have been financed by the cost of a day's war in Vietnam or by our annual bill for Saran Wrap. When science is merged with the passion of committed peoples, malaria won't have a chance.

**Peter Sterling**

*Peter Sterling* does brain research at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine and teaches a course on the neuropsychological and social bases of disease.

## Young Men's Gold
## by Daniel Mark Epstein

(Viking; Overlook Press; $7.95)

"If he learns to handle more gracefully his large pack of skills, he may become one of the best poets of the century." That was the judgment of Paul Ramsey, reviewing Daniel Mark Epstein's second volume of verse, *No Vacancies in Hell* (1973) in the *Sewanee Review*. With the publication of *The Follies* (1977) and now *Young Men's Gold* (1978), that promise looks very close to being fulfilled. Epstein has also written a verse drama, a one act play called *Jenny and the Phoenix* which is moving toward production in New York. It is a work of surprising power, a new departure in the genre, intense, and accessible, and it will bring Epstein to a different and wider audience.

The first poem in *Young Men's Gold* is called "In a Free Country." An adaptation of the sonnet form, it is as good a love poem as has been written in this or any other century. It also possesses a representative character in its relationship to the rest of Epstein's work. Listen to this:

*In a Free Country*

*In a free country I would be shot for my*
*thoughts of you.*
*Where thought was free as radio waves*
*my mind would broadcast your*
*outrageous beauty.*
*Naked phantoms of our wild nights*
*would take every mind by storm.*
*In your name the slaves of industry and*
*commerce*
*would revolt, cops would strike,*
*truck drivers walk off whistling from*
*their loads.*
*All creatures of the earth would drop their*
*pants*
*in tribute, they would fornicate*
*pell-mell,*
*every man, queen, woman, dyke and child.*
*The old would have the young, every mother*
*her son.*
*And I would be hunted down, my brain*
*quarantined*
*in a free country, thinking these*
*last thoughts of you.*

In its combination of tenderness and outrageous wit, this poem brings Donne to mind, and Donne never wrote better. As I say, however, "In a Free Country" has a representative character. Epstein's is an esthetic of surprise, both within each poem and in the relationship of one poem to another. The body of his work which we have before us does not develop except in increasing technical virtuosity. Instead, each poem seems to be a new beginning, a sudden attack into new territory and new combinations of words. They are like separate star-shells going off along some Western Front of the imagination. Each poem affects the reader as something wholly unanticipated.

This sense of surprise, in combination with Epstein's colloquial rapidity, recalls, again, the 17th century:

*When you left in October, I slept*
*three nights in my clothes to keep the chill*
*away.*

*Fast clouds, in a big hurry to rain on somebody*
*but there's blue sky enough for us.*
*October trees, out of their minds with color,*
*and you and me like nothing else alive,*
*cosmic accidents spawned between*
*better judgements.*

This kind of writing takes risks and, as might be expected, sometimes fails, but he also succeeds with surprising frequency.

What influences are present are wholly assimilated: a sense of Browning here and there in the combinations of consonants and in his occasional use of the dramatic monologue; Pound sometimes hovering near ("Bore tide, sea pulse in blind scraps, sea-sturgeon, bluefish spin in green domes of colliding tides." But Epstein's voice is very distinctively his own.

The title poem, "Young Men's Gold," is a verse narrative of over 600 lines in the form of a dramatic monologue. One of the most successful longer poems in recent memory, it is a notable achievement. The speaker, a veteran of the Civil War, visits his wife's grave in the company of his grandson, who is about to leave for France and the First World War. The grandfather recalls his own war, so intensely personal, almost familial, in comparison with the modern war to which the boy is going. He recounts his love, combat, his killing of a

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friend on the Union side, his marriage, the death of his wife in childbirth. The themes are the romantic ones of the dark relationships between love, war, beauty and death.

*In the white room where we first came*
*together,*
*she came to term, delivering*
*her own death, and your father living into*
*my arms.*

*I have held you long enough. Is there a friend*
*waiting for you? Could be that quiet girl*
*you keep a secret from everyone but me,*
*perhaps*
*she can whisper what I cannot speak.*

Romantic without reservation, both direct and richly textured, this verse narrative possesses great power and—dare one simply say it?—beauty.

Epstein's subjects vary, of course, but he is, centrally, a love poet, and a splendid one, an advent I find most welcome on the landscape of 20th-century literature. Poetry of love and celebration of the sweet world—Epstein occasionally takes that term over from Dante—we have scarcely had in abundance.

Epstein is 30, has written four books, knows more than he should for his year. Last year he won the Prix de Rome, and when, in the near future, he achieves general recognition as a major poet remember that you first read about him here.

**Jeffrey Hart**

*Jeffrey Hart* is a syndicated columnist and professor of English at Dartmouth.

## Vulnerable People: A View of American Fiction Since 1945 by Josephine Hendin

(Oxford University Press; $11.95)

After several decades during which criticism has taught us to study novels as if they were cadavers disinfected of history and personality, there is surely health in the reemergence of the view that fiction, after all, has some intimate connection with human life and may even tell us something important about the character of the culture in which it was produced.

It was inevitable that this should occur. Ours has, above all, been a time which has seen the rise of the social and psychological sciences to the status of moral philosophy. We trust their carefully documented divinations of the meaning of experience far more than we do the imaginative insights of current novelists—probably because so many of *them* see so little meaning in anything. Hence, it is logical that a critic with interests in both social psychology and literature might attempt, as Josephine Hendin has done, to determine just how trustworthy is the work of our novelists as a body of instruction in the quality and conduct of life, and the extent to which it dramatizes the emotional derangements which psychology has already discovered to be epidemic in our society.

Hendin's views on this subject have much in common with those put forward by her husband, the psychoanalyst Herbert Hendin in his book, *The Age of Sensation*. His conclusion, based on careful clinical study, was that because of the insecurities and perplexities of contemporary life there have developed, particularly among young people, certain quite ominous afflictions of personality: a largely defensive narcissism; fear of emotional involvement leading to a desire for escape into depersonalized sensation; anxiety in the face of complexity and contradiction leading to a need to homogenize people and events so as to avoid making discriminations and choices.

Mrs. Hendin sees reflections of these and related patterns in a great deal of contemporary fiction. Starting from the premise that recent novels "mirror a search for shock-resistant lives," she establishes the categories of "holistic" for work which stresses "the virtues of management, wholeness, and reason" and "anarchic" where emphasis is placed upon "the mystical values of self-effacement and disintegration." "One aims for a solution through personal durability and turmoil-free performance. The other aims at dismantling the performer."

Obviously, such an approach cannot easily be made to serve the conventional interests of literary criticism. In fact, there may be some question whether the use Hendin makes of it results in criticism at all, since her socio-psychological concerns so dominate her perspective that the nature and quality of the imaginative rendering of contemporary society in fiction is very often eclipsed by speculation about the nature of the society itself, how novelists cope with the disorders supposedly rampant within it and either offer a cure for them or seek to escape from them altogether. This view of novelists as cases of successful adjustment or neurotic withdrawal may be of some value when they are undergoing psychiatric treatment but seems otherwise to be a dubious critical tool. Although we may be persuaded by the propaganda so widely disseminated by the hucksters of how-to-do-it literature that life is a problem to be solved or an ailment to be cured, novelists generally do not see things in such terms. And to the extent that they do, they surrender their imaginative freedom to a mechanistic and finally therapeutic conception of life.

But Hendin tends to treat the works she has chosen to discuss much too exclusively as documentary evidence of the validity of her preconceptions, and in the process she all but ignores such central matters as the role of an author's personal history and psychology in forming his vision of reality; the degree to which the findings of social psychology in fact represent a reliable means of assessing that vision; and perhaps the most intriguing of all, the pronounced similarity in the character of the vision so many of these writers have of contemporary society: a sort of party-line conformity to the negativist stance, an obligatory etiquette of despair, self-hatred, and misanthropy.

John Gardner in *On Moral Fiction* condemns a good many of his novelist contemporaries on just these grounds—for their blind allegiance to a programmatic *angst*, which in his view is as much of a perversion of the truth of life as is uncritical optimism. Hendin, on the contrary, believes that our novelists in their negativism or in spite of it somehow reflect "the richness, excitement, and hope of American experience during the past thirty years." "By confronting both the massiveness of our problems and our inventive energy,



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postwar fiction shows the continuing purposiveness of the imagination. It performs a service by casting shadows as well as light, by making us see with a more powerful and compassionate lucidity."

One might well wish that all this were so. But unfortunately, Hendin's optimism finds little justification in what she has to say about the novelists under discussion. One discovers in them the strongest evidence not of "the continuing purposiveness of the imagination," but of a continuing imagination of purposelessness that casts far more shadows than light and that makes us see not with "a more powerful and compassionate lucidity" but with a sense of blank disgust. By the end of the first section of her book Hendin has presented Vonnegut and Brautigan as offering emotional numbness, cute cynicism ("So it goes"; "hi ho") and infantile escapism as the only possible ways of enduring contemporary life—which is to say, not enduring it.

Even more simple-minded are the writers whom life chokes with a violent rage. An extreme example is Burroughs whose "novels are the experience of his orgiastic hate," for whom "every emotion is a disease, every urge has the driving, manic force of compulsion" and homosexual sex has become an act of icy murderousness among "wild boys" who feel "neither pleasure nor pain." Barthelme is another profoundly angry writer who "has such disdain for life that he estheticizes even his depression." His themes are "the exhaustion of creative power, the disintegration of individual consciousness, the artist's alienation from the ethos that produced a Tolstoy." Truman Capote, also angry, "has Cocteau's unerring instinct for the ghoulishness of everybody—even himself."

Then there are the "holistic" writers like Barth who find meaning in the structurings to be made out of the artistic properties of fiction itself and out of other fabrications such as assumed codes of conduct, roles, and disguises, the provisional protective devices of people like Jacob Horner in *End of the Road* who feel "nothing for anything." The novels of Updike and Bellow impress Hendin as dramatizing effects of holism through their obsessive exploration of the relation between men and women. In the face of the prevailing disgust with life, they offer the humanizing affirmation of emotional allegiance and involvement. A writer like Joyce Carol Oates offers something very similar. "Her answer to fire and brimstone, to the destructiveness that 'does its work,' is to reach beyond it to its source in human suffering and to praise redemptive love."

Since the writers whom Hendin calls anarchic have seemingly been more influential in shaping our attitudes toward contemporary experience than the smaller holistic group, it might fairly be asked just how dependable their predominantly negativist view of that experience is. Hendin appears on the whole to see their work as a just representation of the way we live and feel now. Gardner argues that it emphatically is not and that the prime responsibility of a "moral" fiction is to enhance and dignify our perception of life.

When some years ago middle-brow critics like Bernard DeVoto and J. Donald Adams were proselytizing for a fiction of moral uplift, the indignation they aroused was quite justifiably fierce because the fiction they found so outrageous was not only some of our best but had as its more genuinely moral mission the destruction of cant and hypocrisy and the exposure of the often unpleasant truth of the way things really were. It was the great work of classic modernism in the novel to reinvigorate the integrity of the adversary position and, in so doing, to establish premises of honesty which would liberate writers from the clichés and evasions of the past and enable them to engage the new realities of the modern age effectively.

But when the adversary or negativist view hardens into a fashionable dogmatic stance then it becomes in its turn a cliché, an evasion, an anachronistic outlook which sees only what the past has programmed it to see. This is what Bellow has called the Waste Land syndrome, which he believes now heavily burdens the American literary imagination and has stunted its sense of the possibilities for a new vision, one that will perceive and recreate, in terms original with us rather than borrowed from the past, the more exact truth about the experience of our time.

One of course cannot expect the whole truth about experience from any group of novelists. But one also does not expect to get from so many novelists the same narrow and outmoded version of the truth. As Gardner has suggested


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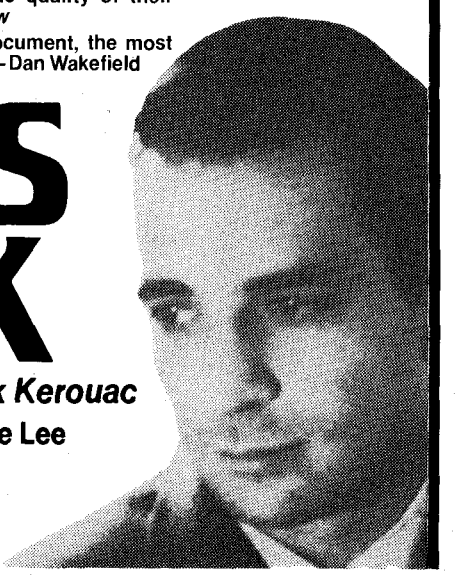




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with much justice, we are in serious need now of the kind of "real art" that "creates myths a society can live instead of die by." Novels that perform this worthy function are obviously not yet proliferating, and that fact makes all the more puzzling Hendin's optimism about a body of fiction, so much of which appears to be frozen in a willed posture of the profoundest pessimism. But then, perhaps her optimism is also willed.

**John W. Aldridge**

*John W. Aldridge* is a professor of English at the University of Michigan.

## On To Berlin: Battles of an Airborne Commander by James M. Gavin

(Viking; $14.95)

As the Commander of the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II, James Gavin was a front-line fighting general; he is in these memoirs a first rate writing general as well. Ranging from vivid descriptions of night parachute drops in Sicily and Normandy, to stirring moment-by-moment accounts of the "Bridge Too Far" campaign in Holland and the Battle of the Bulge, *On To Berlin* presents a memorable tableau of the European war: its debacles and triumphs; its waste and heroism; its absurdity and justifying purpose.

It is an heroic tale, and dashing 36-year-old General Gavin is certainly shaped for the hero's part. He repeatedly exposes himself to enemy fire to put heart into his men. He resolves to hold a ridge against oncoming tanks even if he has to dig in, let the tanks roll over him, and blow them up from underneath. He picks his way across mine fields and dodges artillery shells with nerveless nonchalance. He never seems to be afraid. He rarely sleeps. Like the austere Grant of the famous *Memoirs*, however, he never dilates on his valor, his tactical genius, or the "burdens of command." Instead the focus is always on the fighting men of his division, the obscure Private Goldsteins and Sergeant Owens and Captain Cooks. Their record is nothing short of staggering. They sustained 46 percent casualties in Normandy without yielding an inch of ground. They captured the vital bridge at Nijmegen by crossing the Rhine in rubber rafts under heavy fire (a British general described this as the most "gallant action" he had ever witnessed). They blunted the ferocious SS offensive in the Bulge. And they were being readied to jump into Berlin and perhaps into Japan, when the war blessedly ended. They are the heroes of *On To Berlin*.

General Gavin intersperses his account of the 82nd's battles with shrewd estimates of leading military personae on the Allied side. Patton is for him *the* general of the European war. But Patton was forever "seeking that bubble reputation, even in the cannon's mouth," he adds, using Shakespeare's words to point up the signal defect of Patton's impulsive virtues. He respects Montgomery for his desert campaigns but thinks that his obsession with fighting a final set piece battle in the spring of 1945 prolonged the war by bloody weeks. And he goes out of his way *not* to criticize Omar Bradley and Mark Clark. His severest judgments are reserved for the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower himself.

He holds Ike responsible for some of the major military blunders of the war: for allowing the Germans to evacuate nearly 40,000 men from Sicily to Italy across the narrow straits of Messina, even though the Allies had complete control of the seas; for letting yet another surrounded German army escape from the "Falaise Pocket" in Normandy; finally, for stopping the Allied armies on the Elbe rather than sending them on to take Berlin before the Russians occupied it. In each case, Gavin argues, Eisenhower was simply too remote from the scene of battle to be in touch with what was going on, a style of leadership—call it corporate generalship—that survived into Ike's somnolent presidency. Gavin thinks this kind of generalship is the road to disaster, even in our age of computerized battlefields. A general, he says, must have "the smell of battle in his nostrils" for two reasons: being on the scene allows him to exploit fast-breaking tactical opportunities; at the same time it checks him—or should check him—from ordering his men to do the impossible as Eisenhower did when he sent wave after wave of infantry against the formidably defended Huertgen Forest.

This is certainly an appealing idea but it has a pronouncedly nostalgic ring. Already in Napoleon's day—or in Tolstoy's version of Napoleon's day—battles were too big to control: a general could literally not even see the whole of the battle he was supposed to be directing. (This made a difference from the tidy little battles of the 18th century.) On the other hand, Field Marshal Haig could no doubt *see* the ghastly futility of prolonging the Somme attack of July 1, 1916—for there it was across the trench from him—but he did not call it off until nearly 20,000 British corpses had piled up in front of the German trenches. These examples are not meant to be conclusive. My point is simply this: in criticizing Eisenhower's style of leadership, I wonder if General Gavin isn't quarreling with modern war itself; its stratified organization, its mass character, its systematic impersonal day-to-day reality. There seems no way


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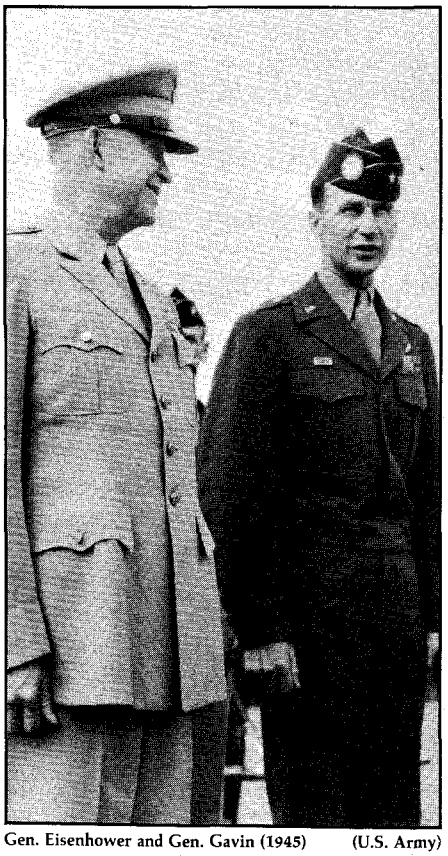
of changing this, however, short of an immense social transformation that would abolish the division of labor in civilian society, of which the military



Gen. Eisenhower and Gen. Gavin (1945) (U.S. Army)

separation between leader and led is simply the extreme manifestation. We may join General Gavin in wishing it were otherwise. But there it is. The late James Jones called WW II a "corporate war" and corporate wars create corporate generals.

I have said that General Gavin is reluctant to make himself the hero of his narrative. He pays a literary price for this; nothing, after all, ties up a book better than a hero, a single center of interest. Lacking this center, Gavin sometimes tells us more, sometimes less, than we want to know. Moreover, it cannot be said that he exploits the dramatic possibilities of his material as fully as more flamboyant memoirists (Patton, Montgomery) might have done. If these are literary faults, they are decided moral gains. Men sound this way when they are trying to tell the truth.

*On To Berlin* ends with these noble words: "It had been a long and costly journey, and when we overran the concentration camps and looked back with a better understanding of where we had been, we knew it had been a journey worth every step of the way."

**Jack Beatty**

# Four First Novels

## The Seclusion Room
## by Frederick Neuman

(Viking; $8.95)

If *The Seclusion Room* were just the story of a suspicious death at a psychiatric hospital, a typical whodonit with the standard cast of eccentric psychotics, villanous staff-members, a shrewd detective and a bizarre final twist, it would scarcely be worth finishing. Although an explanation of the strange death is not offered until the final pages, this novel is no thriller—the pace is too slow and the digressions too prominent. However, this first effort at fiction by psychiatrist Frederick Neuman is rescued by the author's incisive depiction of life (and work) at the Four Elms psychiatric hospital—with all its attendant horrors and absurdities—and the creation of an intriguing and totally sympathetic hero, psychiatrist Abraham Redden.

Redden's lovable klutziness, his complete disregard for things material (evidenced by his appalling sloppiness), his sarcastic wit and deep commitment to his patients make him a charismatic figure. In the novel, Redden is clearly a cut above the other staff who work at the Four Elms, and the same may be said about the quality of his characterization by Neuman. Many characters in *The Seclusion Room* are less ably drawn; they are no match for the overpowering Redden, who dominates both the hospital and the book. Such dominance is ultimately unsatisfying, but Redden is captivating enough to sustain us through a series of increasingly confusing and bizarre plot developments.

Redden has no illusions about his work, or about life, for that matter, but he keeps on fighting and caring. He struggles against what is at best benign neglect and at worst real cruelty on the part of the hospital staff, and is determined to preserve some small shred of dignity for his patients. His battle underscores both the failure of most psychiatric institutions and the limits of his profession. When patients do get better at the Four Elms, it is usually in spite of, rather than because of, the treatment they receive.

Neuman's message is one we've heard many times before—there's a fine line between sanity and madness, and sometimes those society has labelled insane act more rationally and decently than we "normal" people. However, he works subtly, couching his harsh, pointed observations in the story of a bland murder investigation, so that they seem more striking and less clichéd. *The Seclusion Room* is not a good mystery, but it gives us a disturbing glimpse of the care (and lack of it) offered even at private psychiatric hospitals. And I'd like to meet Abe Redden again soon.

**Neil Pickett**

*Niel Pickett* is a former *TNR* intern.

## Downriver
## by Peter Collier

(Holt, Rinehart and Winston; $9.95)

I wasn't swept away by *Downriver*, but there certainly are strong thematic currents, wide stretches of time and space, and turbulent feelings in the book. River imagery—and an actual river, the Fortuna—runs through the novel, carrying the themes of memory, history and destiny. The memories belong to 32-year-old Cabell Hart and his young nephew, Joey, both characters trying to make sense of their pasts and move on to the future. For Cabell, sitting in a darkened Los Angeles hospital room as his father dies, "it had become a profession, this remembering"; he flashes back to his mother's early death, to his life after that with his "omnipotent sitcom father" and adoring sister, to his abandonment of that family circle for a radical cadre in Berkeley, and then far back to his great-grandfather, a missionary and murderer in the Dakota Territory of the 1870s—"trying to bring it together, make it *mean*." For Joey, remembering is a painful task, which he accomplishes by composing a letter to his grandfather (Cabell's dying father) in his mind; he carefully recollects the traumatizing details of the brutal rape and murder of his mother (Cabell's sister) by three small-town Oregonian men—knowing with chilling clarity what it all means: that there must be revenge.

For Collier too, memory is important



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in the creation of his novel. He harks back to imposing literary predecessors who have written of time and rivers and destiny, of family roots and inherited limitations and possibilities. Along with his characters, Collier confronts tradition and tries creatively to move on and innovate. He manages to rework the familiar, grand themes with refreshing energy and some vivid writing. But there are too many stock scenes and characters, too few truly subtle and original moments and gestures. Perhaps memory, the daughter faculty, needs more help from her mother, inspiration. But Collier has only begun and has time to grow.

**A.H.**

## The House of Alarcon
## by Joseph Dispenza

(Coward, McCann and Geoghegan; $9.95)

In 1540 the King of Spain bestowed upon Jose Francisco Alarcon a large tract of land near Taos, New Mexico. Now, more than four centuries later, Juan Mateo, without an heir, faces the end of the House and the loss of the land to developers. The novel opens in the present but gives Mateo's plight dimension by depicting in alternate chapters his family's dilemmas throughout Southwest history. The years at which Dispenza stops provide an interesting historical backdrop: in 1540 the territory we know as New Mexico was still being explored by Europeans; in 1680 Pueblo Indians led by Popé massacred hundreds of Spaniards; in 1750 inter-tribal hostility was strong; in 1863 New Mexico declared for the Union; and by 1965 the A-bomb, developed at nearby Los Alamos, was 20 years old.

With grace surprising in a first novel, Dispenza integrates historically and imaginatively the stories of a dozen generations of Alarcons. There are some problems, however. The language of the Southwest—formal and sonorous, punctuated only with periods and commas, stark in its metaphors, simple in its vocabulary—is proper and adequate for the story, but occasional anachronisms in early sections and modern slang in later ones mar the tone. Also, this language becomes stilted just when Dispenza, encompassing the House and the land in a sweeping historical overview, is trying hardest for eloquence. His control falters slightly in other ways, too: his resurrection of Alarcon ghosts is a clumsy and unconvincing way to keep memories of ancestors alive.

The book's best moments are simple, realistic ones. The cruelty done to Altagracia, a retarded boy, is beautifully told in a few sentences. A savage Indian attack is described quickly and vividly. The world of sexual desire into which Mateo's barren, half-mad wife Carmela has retreated is rendered with exceptional skill. Dispenza deals competently with his omniscient narrative even in its grandest overviews, but his insight and compassion are better evidenced in his treatment of individuals from closer up, in his concrete descriptions of a person's habits, hopes and fantasies.

**Marc Granetz**

*Marc Granetz* is the John Harvard Scholar at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.


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## Adjacent Lives
## by Ellen Schwamm

(Alfred A. Knopf; $7.95)

For six years Natalie has been auditing Tom Rilling's lectures on the history of art with anonymous fidelity; now, for the first time, she is late. "Only when she arrives at her seat does she see that it is already taken. That every seat in the row is taken. That every seat in the hall is taken. She is trapped in the middle of a nightmare." From his lectern at the front of the hall, Tom Rilling summons her to an empty seat—a dark, indefinably attractive woman in her late 30s. He has never seen her before; he's fascinated. After the lecture he asks her name. "'Mrs. Barnes.' She throws the name up in front of her like a shield."

Thus the deft beginning of this delicately perceptive novel by a talent astonishingly mature and accomplished. It is about two people, both married, both with children they love, who came late to passion and whose brief affair is devouringly intense and dangerous but also renewing, a source of understanding and new life. Tom is thin, professorially rumpled, vitally intellectual. Natalie wants to be "intimate with his mind" but fears the inevitable physicality. "Let them get this over quickly," she prays the first time they make love, "so they can get on with the business of knowing each other." Natalie has attacks of metaphysical gloom, but her husband, Gregory, an electronics scientist, seems too stolidly masculine to confide in. Actually, he too has his terrors; but he can't confide in her because he is a successful man and, according to the cruel American creed by which he lives, successful men *must* be happy. So he hides his Valium in a bottle marked "Vitamins" and suffers mutely. As for Tom's wife, Barbara, she gave up on him years ago. "Even his achievements don't move her. He feels that though she expected it and even married him for the promise of it, she has never quite forgiven him his success."

Ms. Schwamm moves in and out of the minds of these characters with impressive ease and accuracy. Her men are as interesting and complex as her women. What's more, they're just as feeling and vulnerable. But it is Natalie—intelligent, fearful, loving, loyal—who is her most memorable achievement.

I just wish Ms. Schwamm had resisted the impulse to put a Cassandra character into her tale; Natalie's melancholy Hungarian uncle, Laszlo, seems to me a great mistake. You hear violins every time he's on. "'Everything you put your faith in in this world,' he intones, 'disappoints. The biggest blow of all: the failure of love as a solution to human problems.'" Alas, the latter part of the novel is marred by a too schematic application of this dour prophecy to the affair between Natalie and Tom. Ms. Schwamm is so much more subtle and convincing when she omits this portentous philosophizing about life and offers us the thing itself—when she shows us Gregory ecstatic at a gesture of affection from his son, Tom frightened by the "bull" Natalie has loosed in his blood, Natalie surprised by the discovery that she is bound to Gregory by the memory of their shared disappointments and



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sorrows. These wonderful moments make you forget the flagrant Laszlo.

Ms. Schwamm is a novelist of adult feeling; her gift is for evoking desire, grief and sexual reluctance. She will remind some readers of Paula Fox; others may think of Mary Gordon, whose *Final Payments* was last year's most acclaimed first novel. I thought of Henry James. Her characters, like his, are both fine and passionate; they want equally to be happy and to be good. It is a complex moral ideal they propose; their creator is a serious and important writer.

**J.B.**

Correspondence, *from page 3*

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*Peter N. Georgiades*
*Washington, DC*

## Mexican oil

*To the editors:*

The unsigned article on optimistic guesses about Mexican oil reserves (*TNR*, August 19) carried the implications that 1) Mexican oil would be better for us than Arab oil, and 2) Mexican and other undeveloped reserves could make the energy crisis go away. Please explain how purchases of Mexican oil will do less damage to the value of the dollar than purchases of Arab oil. Why on earth would Mexico sell to us at a low price? Does Venezuela? Please explain how roughly a dozen years' supply of oil for the West will prevent the energy crisis. Is it any less of a crisis if it occurs in 2012 than if it occurs in 2000?

It was equally evident in earlier articles in *TNR* that your staff has been reluctant to face the simple truth that oil is an exhaustible resource, and that it is being rapidly exhausted. You do your readers a disservice when you give them straws such as Mexican oil to clutch at. We need top quality thought on what preparations should be made in order to minimize the chaos and misery when the oil runs out, as it surely will, given the utter failure of our elected representatives to begin curing citizenry of its energy addiction.

*Philip Filner*
*East Lansing, Michigan*

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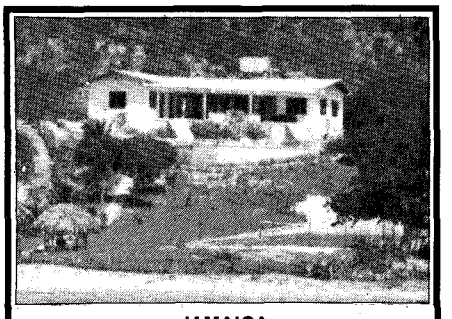

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**An old Carter loyalist,** Edward Sanders, was appointed recently as Senior Adviser to the President and Secretary of State, more or less replacing Mark Siegel, who quit in a row over whether he'd been told the truth about the plane sales to Saudi Arabia. Like Siegel's, Sanders's primary task is liaison with the Jewish community. He had been president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Zionist lobby. So with him at the White House, there was at least one steadfast friend of Israel in the corridors of power. But Sanders understood the limitations and ambiguities of his post, which is essentially that of the *shutzjude* of the 18th century—the especially privileged Jew who maintained liaison between the Jewish community and the local prince. He'd be able to carry a Jewish grievance to the Oval Office, but he also inevitably would be obliged to bear grim tidings and say that they were good. At best, this influence would be political, in the most constricted sense of the word. That's how it always had been. The Jews get a spokesman. But when decisions regarding the Arab-Israeli conflicts actually have been made, these spokesmen—and, more significantly, those scholars and diplomats, Jews and non-Jews, who see the world other than through the Lawrentian eyes of the entrenched pro-Arab establishment—have been excluded. I once reproached Henry Kissinger for insufficient empathy with Israel. He sent me to meet some Middle East types at State, to demonstrate—convincingly—that empathy is relative.

**"The Jewish lobby"** has become a term of abuse. The input of its emissaries, even those officially designated by the president, is easily dismissed. Sanders understood that what our Middle East policy needs is not a reminder of Jewish political strength. What it needs is an intellectually authoritative voice, dissenting from the dominant *Arabisant* opinion at State and in Dr. Brzezinski's National Security staff.

**With the approval** of the president's top aides and the consent of Jimmy Carter himself, Sanders asked Steven Spiegel, an international relations specialist and professor at UCLA, to be his chief deputy. Spiegel happens to believe that Israel is a strategic asset for the US. That's a view held by many Middle East experts, but not by any of those who determine American behavior there. In order to participate fully in top-level discussions, Spiegel needed and was promised high security clearance, access to relevant intelligence information and the important cables, etc. Panic set in at the NSC and at State, at the prospect of someone with outsider opinions in the inner circles. The boys there decided to kill the appointment, and they did, by denying these crucial clearances. Spiegel might still have come were he willing to do nothing. That was the sordid compromise offered and rejected. So William Quandt, Brzezinski's top Middle East analyst long known for his pro-Arab views, will continue to go unchallenged. So will Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Harold Saunders, who is not merely pro-Arab but anti-Israel, just about wholly without guile or ruse. He and I shared a platform at the Council on Foreign Relations a few months ago: he'll not be satisfied till every Israeli lives at maximum peril.

**There's a tradition** among American diplomatic professionals of being not just anti-Israel or anti-Zionist, but downright anti-Jewish. A former student of mine at Harvard, Eric Breindel, now studying at the London School of Economics, has been doing some research at the US National Archives. He produces a steady flow of evidence of the ugly bias. From James Hugh Keeley, US minister in Damascus, to the secretary of state on September 18, 1948: "With due regard for our many citizens of Jewish origin, I respectfully submit that the present is a good time to review the role that Jews have played in world affairs from the crucifixion of Christ, the Messiah, to the assassination of Bernadotte, the mediator, and to reorient American policy accordingly, at least with respect to Palestine." From Robert McClintock to his boss Dean Rusk, then director of the State Department's office of UN affairs, on July 1, 1948: "You are returning to the Department on Friday, July 2, which coincides with my joyful departure for Martha's Vineyard, where I intend to wash away the sins of the Chosen People in the clean salt water." At the end of the same document: "It might also be timely to recall that there is a Biblical prophecy to the effect that the world will come to its end and the Jews regain their homeland." One other American specialist had not just opinions but facts. Wallace Murray, director of State's Department of Near Eastern and African Affairs, wrote his colleagues on December 9, 1944, that no less than "40 percent of the entire Jewish community will want to leave Palestine after the war." The most eminent expert of the day was an Englishman, Harold Beeley of the Foreign Office. He convinced his American acolytes that "Israel will be the 'Communist capital' of the Middle East." These are the biases the experts brought, and this was their expertise. Their successors are not wiser now, which is why they wouldn't give Steve Spiegel a chance.

**Another professor** at UCLA has had better luck. His name is Malcolm Kerr and he has been appointed a consultant on the Middle East at the NSC. His views are not Spiegel's. Why Brzezinski and Quandt need his advice is hard to fathom. They've been doing quite well by his lights, thank you, without him, though at the moment they seem to lack his special ardor for Syria and President Assad. You can get a vulgar exposition of Kerr's views on the *Los Angeles Times* op-ed page. A more careful and more complete statement of the advice he'll give may be found in his testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, July 19, 1976. Sadat would do much more for a settlement with Israel than Kerr would ever want him to.

**It's strange** about experts. The post-World War I boundaries of the Middle East were drawn by Sykes and Picot, experts from the British and French foreign ministries. They drew the frontiers with red crayon and a metric ruler. Many of the present border disputes in the area (Syria and Iraq, Iraq and Iran, for instance) derive from the ignorant hauteur of these experts, drawing lines without regard to demography or topology. I once attached myself as a hanger-on to the party accompanying Secretary of State William Rogers on a tour of Israel, at a time when *his* arbitrary map was everybody's chosen formula for peace. Standing on a high spot in Jerusalem and seeing the Dead Sea in the distance, he exclaimed "I didn't know that the Sea of Galilee is so close."

**M.P.**



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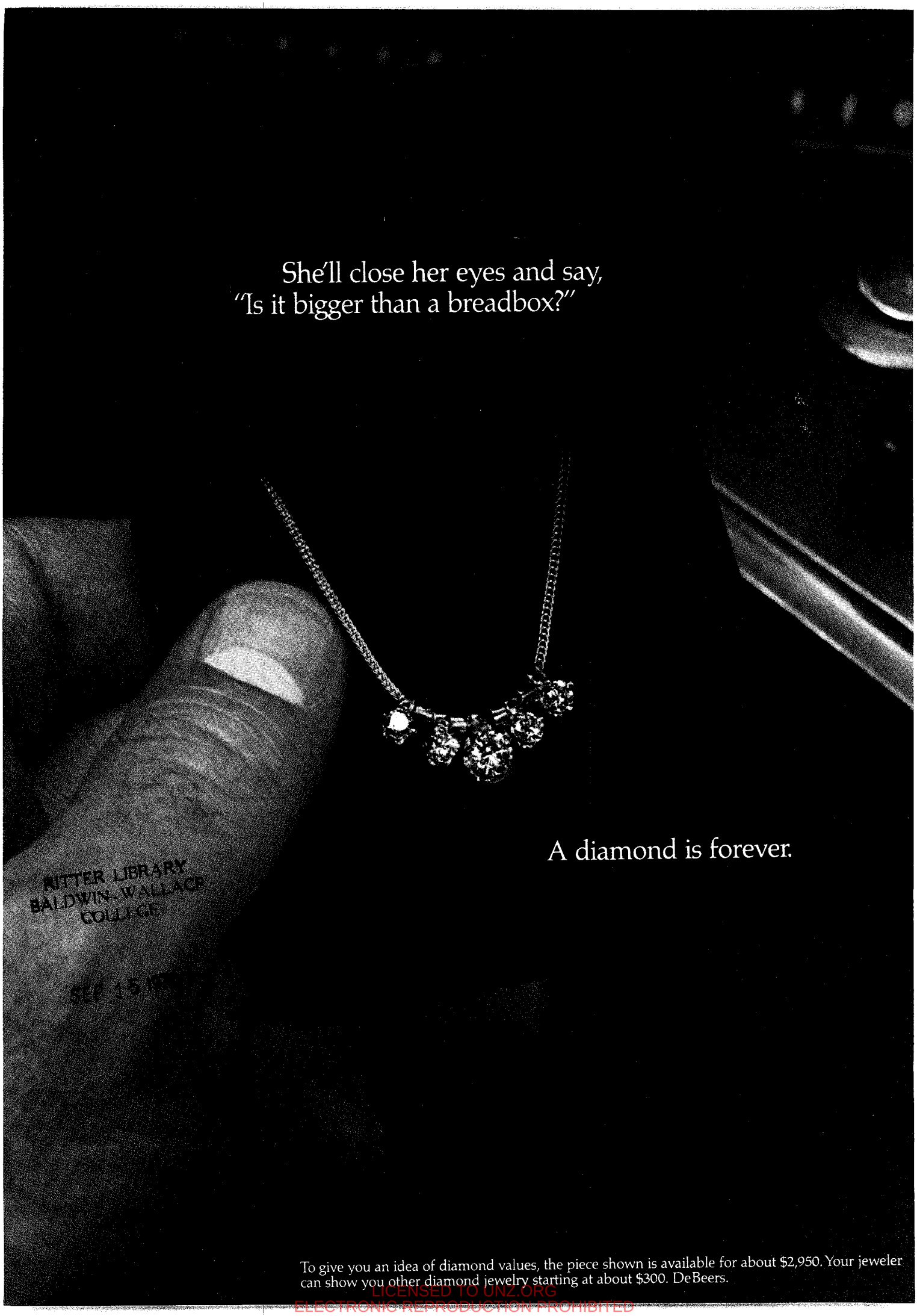


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